

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Woodrow Wilson

It is my sincere hope that much of America's take on Veterans Day is the fact that it is more than an opportunity to find a deal on a new car.

Much like Memorial Day weekend, it's not just a holiday weekend when you can get a great deal on a new mattress, car, or a new appliance.

It's a time to remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice and who continue to deal with the horrors of war.

The Disabled American Veterans' Chapter 11 is named after my daddy's first cousin, Woodrow Wilson. Yes, there was a president with the same name, but, in Blairsville, we know who Woodrow Wilson was.

He was the son of Cicero and Roxie Wilson, the third child born in the family, and like a brother to my daddy, Robert Pierce Duncan. They were so close, you would have thought that they were brothers.

They hunted and fished together, they were inseparable. They served in World War II together. They both came back home, Robert Duncan to Union County, and Woodrow Wilson to Union County Cemetery, in Union County.

Woodrow died on Dec. 16, 1944. It was the Germans' last major offensive of the war, known as the *Battle of the Bulge*, an attempt to push the Allied front line west from northern France to northwestern Belgium. Woodrow was killed in action that day.

Dec. 16, 1944 also was my daddy's birthday. Before heading into battle that day, Woodrow took the time to write down a birthday wish to his best friend and blood relative, Robert Duncan. It was sent to daddy's regiment prior to Woodrow's death.

Daddy got the message from Woodrow. On the same day, he learned that Woodrow was killed in action.

Woodrow's memory lives on through my stories that I honor him with, and DAV Woodrow Wilson Chapter 11.

I never had the opportunity to meet my daddy's best friend and first cousin. He died at 16 years before I was born. But, I remember mowing the grass at Duncan Cemetery as a boy.

Daddy was always beside me when I was mowing near

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Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Go Away

The words "Go away!" are not exactly welcoming. Is it fair to say that to someone that loves you and wants the best for you? What if that someone is God?

One time, some fishermen plied their trade all night, to no avail. Morning found them stowing their gear near the lake, but based on a tip they decided to try again. This time they netted so many fish that their two boats began to sink. The fishermen were Peter, James and John. The tipster was Jesus.

You might think they would jump for joy, and thank Jesus for a true fishing tale! But Peter's response was, "Go away from me Lord." Humility seized him such that he added, "for I am a sinful man" (Luke 5). He was in the presence of the One that knew his heart. Isaiah had the same reaction when he had a vision of the Lord sitting on a throne. "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5). He had seen the King and became self-conscious.

Popular culture encourages distance from God, but not because of humility. Pop singer Gloria Estefan's song "Go Away" says, "Thoughts of you won't ever cross my mind. It's the truth, don't mean to be unkind. 'Cause people have the right to party and you won't let them have their fun." God is a pleasure-snatcher, so let's put Him out of our minds.

Modern entertainment cheapens the idea of fun and pleasure to the point of being double-minded. Look no farther than playboy Hugh Hefner, hailed as an American icon in his passing, yet Hollywood's Harvey Weinstein is a pariah when he acts on the values Hefner portrayed. They would have you face the final curtain and declare with Sinatra, "I did it my way."

To draw near to God is to find deep and abiding joy. He wants you to be adopted into His family through Jesus, to hope in Christ, and to receive an eternal inheritance, "to the praise of his glory!" (Eph. 1:6,12,14). God is good, and is good to you. But if your life is a pursuit of what feels good, you'll miss that. Only God can weave the tapestry of your life and the lives of people around you into eternal good, even if the process doesn't feel fun in the moment. Considering that, why live as though you want

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. If there is a tree leaning or one we are afraid may fall on a county road, whom do we call?

A. You should call the Road Department at (706) 439-6062. They may not cut every tree you call about, but they will inspect it and make the decision as to whether it really needs cut. If you are not sure, it is better to err on the side of being cautious.

Q. What do we do if a neighbor's tree is leaning toward our property and we are afraid it will fall on us?

A. The obvious answer would be to first call your neighbor and see what they think. Like many other issues, people view problem trees in many different ways. Some people are afraid of every tree near their house and some are not. Some people do not like pine trees or especially large white pines or hemlocks and want them all cut. Others love these trees and will not cut them. However, if there is no evidence of the tree being diseased, more than likely it is okay. You can contact the UGA Extension Office at (706) 439-6030 or a certified arborist to come inspect the tree and give their opinion.

Q. Who has to pay for a tree being cut?

A. If it is a tree that may fall on a power line, BRMEMCO may be able to cut it. If the tree is threatening to fall in the road, the Road Department will cut it. However, if it is on your property or that of a neighbor, it is purely a local cost to one or both of the property owners, if they can agree.

Q. Is it too late to get a flu shot this year?

A. No, it is not too late. You still have time to have a flu shot.

Q. We heard about the "high dose" flu shot. Is it something we should have instead of the regular flu shot?

A. If you are 65 years old or older, you should get the high dose flu shot, which provides better coverage.

Q. What does a "high dose" flu shot mean? Does it mean it is twice as powerful?

A. The name "high dose" sounds scary to some, but it is not at all. All it means is that the shot will provide more antibodies for your body, which will make it less likely that you will contract the

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Frank Riley

My Executive Assistant, Kimberly and I recently traveled to Boise, Idaho for NFPA's annual Firewise Liaison training. During this three-day workshop all the Firewise Liaisons from the 42 states with Firewise programs come together to share ideas, brag about their programs, and learn new techniques about how to make our Firewise programs stronger, more meaningful, and be sustainable for the future.

During this weeklong workshop we are also participating in the National Fire Preventive Association (NFPA) sponsored "Assessing Structure Ignition Potential from Wildfire" training. This training goes into scientific detail about what makes fire work and how it spreads through the wildlands and unfortunately many times into communities where homes are lost to these fires. I know we all think that these kinds of losses only happen out west but as I tell folks when they say that, "if we lose only one home it is a tragedy for that family and community and we will do our best to help citizens prevent even one home loss".

Here in the mountains, we are now in the leaf dropping season and the ground and homes are covered with tinder, dry leaves that won't go away unless we remove them from around our houses. All it takes is a spark from a burning leaf pile or a spark from some source and these leaves quickly transform from a pretty pile to a raging inferno that can consume anything in its path, and that could be your stuff and house! When folks leave for Florida, or other warmer parts, for the winter, they should have someone clear leaves from roofs, porches, and around the house so if a fire does start in the vicinity it won't have any fuel to follow and burn the house down. It is easy to get leaves removed and a whole lot cheaper than clearing the charred ruins, rebuilding the home, and losing all your irreplaceable treasures.

We learned in class that wildfires are just the start of the fire tragedy and once homes start to burn they throw fire brands (learned that word today) from house to house in a domino effect so the house burning builds on itself not by the wildfire. The houses become the fuel fanned by winds created by the fire and the process is off and running until it runs out of fuel (houses). Don't let you and your neighbor's houses become fuel, all you must do to reduce your risk is to blow the leaves away from the house and roof!

The Towns County Firewise Coalition is planning to offer help for folks who can't get the job done, because it is in the best interest of the whole neighborhood to keep all houses and lots clear of fuel. Most of the houses in our mountains are not packed together like out west, but even with our spaced-out homes, house fires can create fire brand showers that light fires up to a half mile ahead of the fire front. Houses a half mile away can suddenly begin to burn which will quickly overwhelm our volunteer fire departments. We can fight one house fire very well and protect two or three in the vicinity, but when the fire starts spreading beyond our equipment and manpower capability, we are quickly overwhelmed and the only thing we can do is switch to a defensive mode to protect the homes that are savable (Firewise) and only a few of them. We only have just so many fire trucks and hoses! The best defense for this kind of fire is to prepare the houses ahead of time by clearing the home-ignition-zone of fuel that even a small fire can use to quickly grow and burn up to and into the house.

We also teach property owners how to create a defensible space around the house which is a 30 to 100-foot fuel free zone around the house that firefighters can safely work in to defend the house. Firefighters will not risk their lives to save your house, so homeowners need to do all they can to create a safe place and buy time for the firefighters to do their job. You don't have to clear-cut the defensible space, just use common sense to reduce the fuel that a fire can use to travel to your house.

The good news is, unlike floods, hurricanes or earthquakes, there are simple and often inex-

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RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



When the celebrations and the parades are all done, be sure to take time to thank a veteran.

Invisible Killer

Most people are familiar with smoke alarms and how they can save lives.

Smoke alarms are placed in homes to detect smoke which can give the occupants more time to safely exit the home. Smoke is a by-product of fire and it can be seen or a person can smell it. Carbon monoxide (CO), on the other hand, is called the "Invisible Killer" because it's a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas that can only be detected by a CO monitor.

The CO monitor can be a lifesaving alarm as well. Union County Fire Department would like to provide some information on CO and encourage people to install CO monitors. Carbon Monoxide is produced by the incomplete burning of various fuels including wood, charcoal, oil, kerosene, propane, and natural gas. According to the CDC, CO "is found in fumes produced any time you burn fuel in cars or trucks, small engines, stoves, lanterns, grills, fireplaces, gas ranges, or furnaces. CO can build up indoors and poison people and animals who breathe it." CO can be very dangerous and can affect everyone in the home or building. There are several tips to prevent CO poisoning during this winter season. People should have their heating system, water heater, and any other gas appliances inspected or serviced by a qualified technician. Chimneys should be inspected and/or cleaned every year. People should never use outdoor appliances such as charcoal grills, portable gas camp stoves, or generators inside the home, basement, or garage.

The best practice is to have a CO monitor in your home to detect the CO levels before levels rise affecting the health of the occupants. People exposed to CO will start to present with certain signs and symptoms.

These signs and symptoms begin with: headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea, and dizziness. Higher levels of CO or prolonged exposure produce signs and symptoms of mental confusion, vomiting, loss of coordination, and loss of consciousness. If not treated, CO poisoning can lead to death. A tale-tale sign is that more than one person in the home may suddenly have the same signs and symptoms. If you suspect CO, evacuate the home or building to an area of fresh air. Call 911 and have the fire department check the home for CO levels. Working CO monitors work best to detect dangerous CO levels before signs and symptoms develop. Union County Fire Department recommends that anyone who has heating units or other equipment that may produce CO gas to purchase a CO monitor for their home or building.

Union County Fire Department ~ Our Family Protecting Your Family ~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Nobody will run over me

My great-great-great grandfather, Wyatt Cummings, fought in the War Between the States.

At the time of the war, he lived in North Alabama. He voted for Lincoln because he was opposed to the war and his great-great grandfather fought with George Washington during the Revolution.

When Alabama succeeded from the Union most of the people in his community tried to sit out the war. They didn't want to fight against the south. However, the Home Guard tried to force my ancestor and others to fight for the South. It was reported that one of Wyatt's friends was hung two times (Uncle Billy survived both of these) because he refused to fight for the South. So, Wyatt and his friends slipped through the lines into Tennessee and signed up with the North to fight the remaining years of the war on the Federal side.

Most of these battles were in middle Tennessee around the Duck River. Most of the people wounded in the war died not from their wounds, but, from disease. One of Wyatt's brothers also volunteered for service in the 2nd Tennessee Mounted Infantry.

Absolem died on the field of battle from dysentery. During this same period of time another young man from Northern Alabama joined the Union cause and fought in the same outfit with my ancestors.

His name was Tom Clark. There was another fellow from the area of the same name. So, everyone called this fellow "Mountain Tom Clark." One of his first duties included serving as a guard to the camp. This was particularly important because many young recruits would try to slip out of camp and return back home. The danger was that these deserters would fall into the hands of the Home Guard and provide them with information about the Federal Army.

One fellow was very homesick and wished to be back home with his young bride. After observing Mountain Tom for a few days the man guessed that he would accept a bribe.

Clark received a gold watch and chain in exchange for turning his head so this fellow could slip out of camp.

At muster the next morning, the man was found to be missing and an investigation ensued. In the mean time Mountain Tom had been showing off his watch to his comrades.

The problem was that other soldiers knew this watch had been owned by the fellow, who had deserted. So, it didn't take long before lead-

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Holly Bushes

Well it seems since Halloween has passed, we've skipped Thanksgiving and already started decking the halls with evergreens and hollies! Christmas is my favorite time of year so that's no problem for me, and it's certainly no problem for our holly trees and bushes either. This is their favorite time of year, too! I daresay the birds that feast on their berries also appreciate the increased holly presence because holly berries provide food when most of the other fruit has dropped. There are over 400 species of hollies and many of them have several different varieties that suit different landscaping needs. Whether you want a foundation planting, low hedge or trees, there is probably a holly variety for the space you want to fill.

Hollies require well-drained soil that is slightly acidic and has plenty of organic matter. Mulching is a good option to keep weeds down, and it will hold moisture and keep the soil cool. They can grow in part shade, but produce the most flowers and berries when they are planted in full sun. Planting in full sun also helps with maintaining their shape and minimizing pruning because the branches will not become leggy as they try to reach more sunlight. While many hollies are self-fertilizing, some varieties have exclusively male and female plants. Only the females will produce berries, and in order to do so, you will need a male holly nearby.

These plants are hearty, though they do have some problems. If hollies are not producing berries, there could be a pollination issue, high nitrogen levels in the soil, or a late frost that burned flowers that bloomed a little too early. It could also be that the varieties you have are immature and will not produce berries for a few more years, so always make sure to do your research before installing them on your property. Pests can also be a problem. Scale insects, bud moths, red mites and leaf miners all feast on holly trees and bushes, and some cultivars are susceptible to root rot.

The American holly is a native plant and typically what inspires our Christmas decorations. It has large spiny leaves and bright red berries. They require a lot of space as they can grow up to fifty feet tall. Some common varieties are Stewart's Silver Crown, Merry Christmas, Jersey Delight and Jersey Princess (these require a Jersey Knight to be pollinated and produce berries). The Yellow Berry American holly also produces bright yellow berries if you are looking for a more unconventional tree. English and Yaupon hollies also grow into evergreen

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Regina Allison



Upcoming attractions

Christmas will be here soon so be sure to get a jump start on your holiday shopping at the 17th Annual Mistletoe Market.

There will be arts and crafts for sale as well as homemade soups, sandwiches, goodies and more! The event is being held at the Blairsville Campus of North Georgia Technical College Nov. 18th, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Nov. 19th, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. For more details, contact Artworks, (706) 896-0932.

The Chamber of Commerce will again be hosting the Tour of Trees at the Union County Community Center. This annual event is a lot of fun for our local businesses and civic organizations to show off their creative side by decorating a large tree, small tree, or a wreath. We already have had quite a few businesses and organizations sign up to participate again this year, so be sure to secure your spot by contacting the Chamber Office today! The trees and wreaths will be

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