

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Vietnam War Veterans Day

Monday, March 29, was National Vietnam War Veterans Day in the United States. It is celebrated on the 29th because it was the day the last of the troops were withdrawn in 1973. I state that knowing full well there were troops left behind, perhaps as casualties of war or as prisoners not yet returned to us. President Trump recognized the annual holiday in 2017 by signing this special day into law. It is a separate holiday from Veterans Day, which is celebrated in November to mark the end of World War I. Why do you think it took so long for the VietNam troops to be celebrated – well over 40 years? Perhaps anti-war sentiment, perhaps the large number of casualties, perhaps the large POW/MIA population – all reasons that are very hard to face.

Military Musings

Janice Walters-Taylor



Starting as a civil war (is there really such a thing as a CIVIL war?) between the North and South Vietnam governments – the North backed by China and the Soviet Union, the South backed by anti-communist allies such as Australia, New Zealand and the United States, among others – the war raged on for about 20 years, stemming the tide of communism in another country. Some say that there were communist rumblings in the region as far back as the French Colonial period in the 1800s. In the early 1900s, Ho Chi Minh was trained in the Soviet Union as an agent of Communist International. Japan and France and Germany all had hands in trying to influence the political climate in the region for nearly 100 years.

I think often about the horrible welcome that the Vietnam Veterans received upon their return to the motherland. Antiwar protests fueled dissent about the VietNam War, and that spilled over into anti-soldier sentiment. Those folks were only over there doing what was asked of them, and we so wrongly took out our frustration with government policies on them. And, as with any war, the spoil of civilian carnage is always a factor – innocents caught in the crossfire.

This was not only a war with bullets, it was also a mental war. Some may have heard that the Ace of Spades was often used on the bodies of deceased enemy soldiers, a process that was originally a spoof. However, by the end of the war, the Ace of Spades had become synonymous with the representation of death. The Vietnamese also have elaborate death rituals, ensuring safe passage to the

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Honest Love

“Let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him” (1 Jn. 3:18-19).

Kim Scott was an executive with Google and other tech companies. She tells about hiring “Bob,” a likeable guy with a stellar resume. Soon it was apparent he couldn’t do the work. She and the rest of the team covered for Bob... for a while. She finally fired him. He reacted, “Why didn’t you tell me? Why didn’t anyone tell me? I thought you all cared.” It was uncaring to let him think all is well.

Love embraces truth, and truth matters. For example, if it’s true that God made you, then that defines you. Truth matters because this is a sin-marred world that is good at deception. It matters because you cannot be anything you identify yourself to be, and you’ll ruin yourself trying. Isn’t it loving to be honest about that?

This might be inside baseball, but I’ve witnessed a lack of loving honesty among those who claim to represent the Christian worldview. Is as though they realize the message of the cross really is scandalous and needs softening, modernizing.

The soft line is that if you try hard to do better, that’s enough. Hope your good outweighs the bad. God loves you anyway and knows you try. So, keep trying, Bob! The modern take is that if you interpret the Bible the right way and account for the current cultural mood, you’ll see God actually blesses what used to be “sin.” Great job, Bob!

Here is some honest love. The Bible says you are a broken, lost sinner in need of a Savior. That’s the scandal. You are not “basically good” but when God re-creates you in Christ, you inherit His goodness. Your high calling is to live out that new identity. Transformed by the love of Christ, you don’t excuse or bless sin; you abandon it. You flourish as a human by believing what God says about you and by being reconciled to God through Christ on His terms. Love doesn’t participate in lies and omissions. It speaks the truth even when painful.

In the foreword to Brennan Manning’s “The Ragamuffin Gospel,” Rich Mullins states the gospel of Christ as “the good news that, although the holy and all-powerful God knows we are

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Commissioner’s Questions

County governments were originally created as administrative divisions of the states. Each state government in the country has designed, through its constitution and statutes, the authorities, and powers that counties may exercise. I often encounter people who want to understand more about the differences between a County Sole Commissioner and a County Board of Commissions. This can become a heated discussion, but I do try to help educate our residents on the advantages of the Sole Commissioner structure for county leadership in Union County.

Q. What are County Commissions? What do they do?

A. County commissions levy local taxes, administer county governmental services such as prisons, courts, public health oversight, property registration, building code enforcement, and public works such as road maintenance and paving. To effectively carry out the role of commissioner requires making many decisions. To make good decisions, a commissioner needs good information. Gathering the necessary data and statistics requires time by the commissioners or staff. The commissions perform both the executive and the legislative duties, meaning it enacts local ordinances and administers them. The commissioners approve budgets, oversee spending, and hire county employees. While the commissioners are responsible to the voters, the duties are defined and controlled by the state constitution and state statutes.

Q. Describe the basic differences between a Sole Commissioner and a Board of Commissions organization.

A. Basically, the sole commissioner form of government has only one executive, whereas the board of commissions form has multiple members. Georgia is the only state that allows sole commissioners. With the board of commissions structure, a county is usually divided into districts with one commissioner representing each district. Generally, Post Commissioners spend a lot of time protecting and looking after their particular district as that is where their voters come from. A Sole Commissioner has the additional responsibility of looking after the entire county.

Q. How many counties have Sole Commissioners?

A. Seven counties out of 159 counties have a Sole Com-

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Resurrection Day

Dear Editor,

As we fast forward remembering Jesus Christ’s resurrection from the dead, which brings all of mankind hope for another glorious day when those who have accepted Christ’s death on the cross, His burial and His miraculous resurrection from the dead will be ushered into the very throne room of God, and there we will remain forevermore with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Folks, this old sinful world has no hold on those who love God, and it sure doesn’t have any hope for peace on earth, goodwill towards men. People for generations have denied the resurrection of Christ and have gone out into a holding place, until the Great White Judgment seat of Christ denies them to their face by the saddest words spoken from Jesus’ mouth – Depart from Me, for I never knew you.

As I live and breathe the word of God, I am telling you all it is going to happen, just like the Scriptures say, and is no human being can turn the tide of what God has ordained in the age of grace, which we are living in today. Doesn’t matter what one thinks of what is going to take place when Christ returns to earth to gather His own unto Himself.

I pray you will be among those who have received Christ as your Lord and Savior, so that you will be able to sing a new song in heaven with the rest of the saints of God.

Don’t throw your life away to ill winds of deceit that Satan has been selling since the Garden of Eden.

God’s word has remained faithful for over 2,000 years and has been proved to be not only trustworthy, but downright Holy and Righteous to the core. God didn’t created you to spend eternity separated from Him.

If I could myself save everyone, I surely would, but that task belongs to the One who hung upon that old rugged cross we sing about and died for all sinners, that they might be set free to live in glory with the Lord, Jesus Christ – King overall. Amen.

Frank F. Combs

Our Answer

Dear Editor,

I believe our answer to America’s problem is in the Bible and prayers. 2 Chronicles 7:14. Read it, pray it and pass it on.

Charlotte Thompson

Convention of States

Dear Editor,

There is an effort underway, and I hope the entire country will truly get behind it, although that may be asking too much. The Founders of our Republic were so insightful as to what could happen to the newly formed country that they created in the Constitution Article Five, allowing the states to form a “Convention of States” to alter or amend the Constitution if the federal government became too powerful.

It takes 38 states to approve Constitutional amendments without Congressional approval. People, this may be the only hope we have to save our country from becoming One Nation Under Government.

The 13-foot fence that was erected around “our” House of Representatives was put in place to protect less than 400 citizens, yet our southern border is so porous now that anywhere from 3,000 to 5,000 illegals are crossing every day, with estimations of up to 117,000 unaccompanied children crossing by year end. The Biden administration has returned to the Obama “catch and release” policy; migrants are turning themselves in to be bussed, at taxpayer expense and without any documentation, to all parts of “our” country, some even testing positive for COVID-19.

What will this do to our country? With total Democratic control in Washington, the al-

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It is Christ that died, ...that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Rom 8:34



Prepare for Wildfires

I know it is raining again and we think there is no chance of anything burning, but events in a short dry spell a couple of weeks ago should have been a wake-up call of how quick our woods can go from too wet to burn to “OH My Goodness call 911, my little leaf pile fire that I left unattended for a few minutes is racing toward my shed!” It can happen before you can turn around and by then it is too late to try to stop it. It is a whole lot faster than you are!

We had a couple of wildfires in Towns County a few weeks ago both caused by debris burning at the wrong time and without proper equipment and NO PERMIT. This in not rocket science, you just do not burn when the conditions are unsafe, (wind high, humidity low, moisture low) and you do not burn without plenty of water, proper tools, a wide cleared area, and plenty of help, even for a small pile of leaves.

The burn permit is free, and it can get you out of a lot of trouble and expense if your fire burns something it is not supposed to. Helicopters and bulldozers are terribly expensive and can cost you! It is a get out of jail free card so get one even for a small fire.

I know you think that you have done this for years and never had a problem, but that first one that gets your house, shed, car, neighbors house, and beyond is a real bummer! And you do not forget that the fire agencies can charge you for the suppression costs and you do not even want to know what a heavy lift helicopter cost!

So, think before you light that match “Do I really need to burn these leaves now or should I wait until things are right?” That decision can mean the difference between disaster and business as usual.

Here are some tips from NFPA Firewise on how to prepare your home for Wildfires. Most are common sense, but we need to be reminded sometimes to check our common sense before we take on something that might lead to disaster.

1. Home Ignition Zones: To increase your home’s chance of surviving a wildfire, choose fire-resistant building materials and limit the amount of flammable vegetation in the three home ignition zones. The zones include the Immediate Zone: (0 to 5 feet around the house), the Intermediate Zone (5 to 30 feet), and the Extended Zone (30 to 100 feet).

2. Landscaping and maintenance: To reduce ember ignitions and fire spread, trim branches that overhang the home, porch, and deck and prune branches of large trees up to 6

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RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



The Mailman

My grandparents lived on a dirt road in a little community called Trapptown in Northwest Alabama. Even when I was a young child, very little traffic passed their home, and when a car did pass it was something of interest. If I heard a car coming down their road, I would run to the front of the house to look and see who was driving by. I yearn for that lack of traffic nowadays. But back then a car meant the possibility of a cousin coming to visit, or if the car was the mailman, maybe we were about to receive a bit of interesting news. And I am quite sure that when my Dad was a boy, the same was true or maybe more magnified. Because in those days, they only had the newspaper and radio for their news. So, when a car drove down their road, everyone took notice.

Judd Colson was a good man who delivered the mail Monday through Friday each week at the same time of day for years and years. Early in his career he delivered the mail in a T-Model Ford in which the heater did not work. So, on real cold days, my grandmother would heat up a large rock by placing it close to their fireplace. When Judd drove up to their mailbox, Glenna and her two young sons, Paul and Bud, would be waiting. They gave Judd the rock which would be placed on the floorboard under his feet. The warm rock would keep his feet warm for an hour or two while he was on his mail route. Judd’s only vice was that he loved Topp’s Sweet Snuff, and he was very messy with it.

For those of you who have never seen snuff being used, let me describe the process. Judd would take a pinch of snuff in one hand and pull out his lower lip with the other. The pinch of snuff would be placed between the gum and the lower lip. As Judd grew older, he would use so much snuff that it would leak out of the corners of his mouth. In an effort to keep his mouth clean, the mailman would grab an old piece of paper and wipe his mouth, discarding the paper. He tried to make sure he was presentable. After all, he was representing the Federal government.

On a hot day in July, Columbus and Glenna as well as their two boys were chopping or hoeing out their cotton. Grandpa had just left the field to prepare dinner. Dad noticed Judd driving up the road toward their house. The mailman stopped and placed the mail in their mailbox. Papa looked up toward the house and told his two sons to run get the mail. He said, “I have a few more feet of this row to finish and I’ll be along directly.”

The two cotton-headed boys raced the

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Cedar-Apple Rust

Cedar-apple rust is a common disease in our area. If you have apple trees you have probably seen it before. It is an unusual disease in that it alternates between hosts. Let’s talk about this disease so that you can learn how to identify and control it.

Cedar-apple rust (CAR) is from the Pucciniaceae family. Members of this family need more than one host to complete their life cycle. Some other diseases in this family are black stem rust of wheat, soybean rust, and white pine blister rust. Apple trees that are heavily infested with CAR will see reduced yield and blemished fruit. It can also weaken and kill eastern red cedar if the infection is severe enough, but this is rare. Red cedar is the primary alternate host for CAR. On apple trees, the infection creates orange-yellowish spots. On cedar trees, you will see gelatinous masses form that are bright orange. You also see what are called telial horns that grow out of the mass. To me these masses look like they are not from this earth. If the tree is heavily infected it might look like little Christmas decorations hanging from the limbs.

These masses will start to appear on cedar and juniper trees about seven months after infection and turn gelatinous 18 months after infection. The horns begin to appear, but if the weather is dry, they will dry out quickly, and then swell back out after a rain. The horns release spores to infect apple trees. The masses on the cedar tree will dry up and remain on the tree for about another year, but they are dead at that point. The spores released can only infect plants from the rose family, like apple trees, not more cedar trees. The spores released can travel 2 or 3 miles on the wind to infect an apple tree. When they land on an apple tree, they germinate and create the orange spot. These spots release a sticky liquid to attract insects. As the insects pick up the sticky liquid they transport spores from one infection to the next, which fertilizes the disease. The disease then grows through the leaf and creates new spores on the bottom side that are blown back to a cedar tree to start the cycle all over again.

Spraying against this disease on cedar trees is not recommended. CAR will rarely kill cedar trees. You can prune out galls to slow its spread. If you see this disease on a cedar tree, it may be best simply to co-exist with the disease, as it does little damage to the cedar. On apple trees there are some other management options. It will cause apple trees to lose their leaves and infects the fruit. Captan and myclobutanil can

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber

President

Steve Rowe



What a great week! It’s Easter, and the trees are blooming. The weather is warming, and it’s time to give away the huge Easter basket gathered by all the participants in the Blairsville Easter Bunny Shops Local Hunt. We want to thank Karyn Woody Real Estate for partnering with us to bring a fun downtown, egg hunt to our community. Check our website, visitblairsvillega.com and facebook for more information on this and other Easter egg hunts and which local restaurants are serving Sunday brunch.

Mark your calendar for our ribbon crawl, April 8th when we welcome The Barn at Young Harris and Forget Me Not Collectibles. If you love students, do not miss the chance to sign up for limited seating at An Evening with The Stars, catered by LongHorn Steakhouse on April 15th when we honor the STAR Student and other high achieving students and alumni. We want to thank the BRMEMC for being our presenting Sponsor.

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