

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Prescribed Burns

If you were in Union County, or actually anywhere in the north Georgia mountains last week, you were able to see the smoke from the prescribed burns that were conducted in the Cooper's Creek area. The U.S. Forest Service performed the prescribed burns on Monday, April 19, and Tuesday, April 20. Many people had questions as to what was burning, was it a controlled fire, and why were they burning.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, this prescribed burn consisted of four separate burn units (Dunsmore Mountain, Fish Knob, Spencer Mountain, and Duncan Ridge/Pretty Branch) located within Union County and in the western half of the Cooper's Creek WMA. The combination of all four units totaled 4,608 acres.

This prescribed burn was performed in a controlled setting with a great deal of planning and coordination with various federal, state and local agencies. U.S. Forest Service places a great deal of planning and preparation when performing a prescribed burn, especially with a burn this large. They factor in many variables such as safety, location, terrain, fuel load, fuel characteristics, weather, smoke dispersion, resources needed to manage and contain the fire, and many more.

Weather plays a major role in decision making. The conditions must be dry enough to enable the fuel (leaves, downed vegetation and debris) to burn but also wet enough to reduce the wildfire risk. Weather also plays a role in smoke management. There has to be correct temperatures, atmospheric conditions, and solar radiation to enable the smoke to lift, and enough wind to disperse the smoke effectively to reduce the risk of unhealthy air quality. Fire managers rely on up-to-date forecasts from the National Weather Service to ensure that they will meet their objectives and smoke management policies. They also communicate with the meteorologists throughout the day to adjust their tactics if the forecast changes.

There are many reasons for performing these prescribed burns. Most can be found in the U.S. Forest Service Goals and Objectives for Fire Management. According to the U.S. Forest Service, "Prescribed fire effectively and efficiently reduces the level of hazardous fuels thus reducing risks and costs. After many years of fire exclusion, an ecosystem that needs periodic fire becomes

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



May Day

The Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc governments adopted May 1 as a day to celebrate communism. They intended it to recognize laborers in their socialist system. They didn't know their governments would collapse under the weight of that system in less than 75 years.

China still celebrates the communist holiday to foster good will. If it is to survive, the Chinese Communist Party has to pacify the other 93% of Chinese citizens who are not Party members. The great con is that the Party is China's only hope for national survival and success.

A republic is not immune to a similar deception. The zeitgeist of recent years beckons you to trust politicians and government as your only hope. Why do people fall for that? In "The Political Illusion" (1967), Jacques Ellul writes about people acting with religious fervor for politics. They do not realize they're trying to address their own, unmet needs. He writes, "In great, solemn, vibrant meetings in defense of the republic man can experience the communion that he absolutely needs but no longer finds in his family, his neighborhood, or his work - a common objective, some great popular drive in which he can participate, a camaraderie, a special vocabulary, an explanation of the world. Politics offers him these joys and symbols." If politics is your source of identity and meaning, the bond that holds everything together, then you have traded your birthright for a bowl of lukewarm porridge. It's what mass media serves for dinner.

Where can you find the communion you need, something that explains the world and gives you meaning? Answers that fail to address what is true and real about the human condition, what's right and wrong, ultimate destiny - they're porridge. It helps that Jesus gave us a simple outline for finding solutions. "Love the Lord your God" and "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:36-40). Paul repeated those ideas, declaring that his priority was "to know Him and the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10) and that "love does no wrong to a neighbor" (Rom. 13:10).

Much of American politics today hurts and divides. It ob-

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

You may recall an earlier set of questions that were raised about litter on our roads. In recognition of the Great American Cleanup and in conjunction with the North Georgia Resource Management Authority, my staff has put together a great program encouraging community involvement. This week's questions come from inquiries about the Union County Litter Awareness Program.

Q. What is the Great American Cleanup?

A. The Great American Cleanup is promoted between March 20 - June 20, 2021 by the Keep America Beautiful organization. You've probably heard of this national organization. A leading national nonprofit, Keep America Beautiful inspires and educates people to take action every day to improve and beautify their community environment. The Great American Cleanup program prompts individuals to take greater responsibility for their local environment by conducting grassroots community service projects that engage volunteers, local businesses, and civic leaders.

Q. How does the Union County Litter Awareness Program fit into this scenario?

A. Reports of litter on our roads have been coming into my office. We evaluated our options for addressing the problem. Because the Great American Cleanup began as a litter cleanup initiative designed to aesthetically improve local environments, we created the Union County Litter Awareness Program to align with that national effort. To this day, community cleanups remain at the very heart of the national campaign, and in 2019 alone, over 40 million pounds of litter and recyclables were collected by volunteers throughout the country. Recently in Union County, it was documented that detainee work crews had picked up 9,450 pounds of litter along a stretch of 93.59 miles of county roads. We are hoping to see even greater results locally as a result of this program/contest.

Q. Exactly what is Union County's Litter Awareness Program?

A. The program is a contest offering monetary prizes for the most miles of road picked up during the time frame of April

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Spring, the Season of Change

Ah, spring is in the air. I think we all look forward to the break in the cold weather, the allergies and myriad "cold snap" weather periods as we make our way through spring to the pleasures of summer. As it happens for most of the Veteran Service Organizations, nominations have already been made for a new slate of officers to be installed through the late spring in anticipation of being in full charge come summer. And with new leadership comes pleasures and challenges.

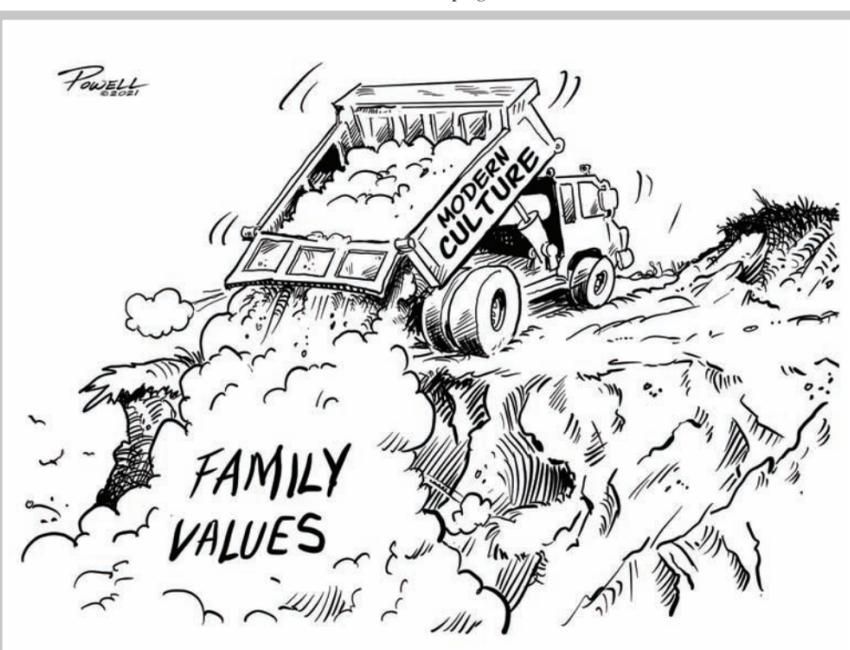
For some, the pleasure comes in fulfilling their year as a leader in their respective organization. For others who get elected, it's the fruition of a dream to become a leader and put their stamp or fingerprint on their organization. On the flip side, there are those that say one year in a position is hardly enough, as it takes a good while to get familiar with all of the regulations and inner workings of the group to become well-versed and effective in the role. Most all of the Veteran Service Organizations have a Mission Statement, Organizational Constitution, By-Laws and Standing Rules, Robert's Rules of Order, as well as reporting requirements to and from their regional, state, and even national organizations. Phew, that's a lot. One way to combat the stress of having leadership learn on demand all of the regulations is to elect or appoint a library steward, whose duty is to maintain and update all of the pertinent governing documents, intently read them to the near point of memorization, and be the official guidepost for adhering to written policies that govern the organization.

As outgoing president of the American Legion Auxiliary, I share that our group expe-

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Military Musings

Janice Walters-Taylor



Letters to the Editor

Looking Waaay Back on Life!

Dear Editor,

One of the interesting things about getting older is reminiscing about one's life and comparing it to life in the 21st century. It seems as though there have been such drastic changes, and it's hard to see how we have experienced such radical changes that I can hardly imagine how "my and (maybe) your world" has devolved into a place we can barely recognize.

After I married and had three young children, I was a stay-at-home mom. Apparently, that was not an acceptable role, because that was in the era when Women's Lib raised its specter of influence. I've always considered myself "feminine," just not a feminist! The others in the Jr. Women's Club (all of whom also had young children) were all planning to get additional degrees and "make their mark on the world." When the conversation turned to me, they asked what my plans were. I replied that I was a housewife, though I would later change that inaccurate title to "homemaker" since I wasn't married to a house. They said I was smarter than that, and anyone could change dirty diapers. I replied, "Yes, but they're my children's diapers and it's what I choose to do."

That was fairly much the end of my status as a Preferred Member of the Club, although after several years of serving in the organization in various roles, there was not another person who qualified to run for president. I had no interest in the job, but others prevailed on me to accept the position. Even then, I experienced what no one in the club had ever faced: 10 members petitioned to vote against me! I was elected unanimously - except by those who thought their opinion was more important than club rules and that my views should be cancelled!

During my time in that organization, a woman's right to abortion became the "Cry of the Day." In a conversation about that subject, the overwhelming opinion was that it was a woman's right. They asked my opinion, and I said I didn't support it but was told that my (Christian) opinion couldn't be foisted upon other women! Again, my views were cancelled!

And, there in a nutshell, is what I see when I look back on how only Some Opinions and Some Stances can be tolerated... and here in 2021, for the first time, I understand how the Cancel Culture had its beginnings. My understanding of how it began, so slowly and insidiously, slow step by step, but has now gathered so much momentum, makes it seem that it will be hard - but not impossible - to turn the tide. Giving up is not an option, and women with strong convictions are strong women. The gauntlet has been thrown down, and the challenge is ours. Are

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She Never Grew Old

Delphia Adams was a person who loved life. She very much enjoyed taking us kids to Little Bear Creek to swim and play in the water at Baker Rock. She was an expert at catching catfish. She knew where to find the best and sweetest blackberries. She was rock solid in her faith. But she never let her age deter her from having fun. She loved us grandkids and didn't mind spoiling us. When we stayed with her during the summer she made "Chocolate Gravy" for us each and every morning. Chocolate Gravy poured over two to three hot buttered biscuits is the same as having a seven-layered chocolate cake. You can imagine what that kind of breakfast did for a bunch of 12-year-old country boys.

After all, when you get up at the crack of dawn you need a pick-me-up. On one such morning after we had tended the five chicken houses, she had all five of her grandsons picking blackberries in an abandoned field close to her house. She mentioned her father, Charlie Baker. At the mention of his name, we all became inquisitive about our Great Grandfather. We found out that he was a farmer and logger, and that he loved fox hunting better than any other pastime. Also, everyone in the community called him Dad because of the great respect he commanded. Everyone loved him because he was kind and generous and never had a bad word to say about anyone. But he attended Blue Springs Missionary Baptist Church and he could be quite stern. One of the taboos of the church during this time was that dancing was of the devil. So, the Baker children were never allowed to attend any kind of social where dancing might occur.

When Delph was about 13 one of her cousins came for a visit. This same cousin had recently visited the big city of Birmingham and while there had learned to do a new dance called the Charleston. My grandmother loved life and trying new things. So, she begged her cousin to show her the new dance moves. So, Delph, Lucille and their cousins were out under Dad's apple trees learning this new dance when Dad walked around the barn and caught them. My grandmother was a quick thinker so, when she was asked "What are you'ns doing?" she responded, "Daddy, we are playing 'Ring Around the Rosies.'" Luckily, Dad Baker knew nothing of dancing, or the girls would have received a spanking.

She was rock solid in her faith and made sure we were in church with her each Sunday morning. Surprisingly, we learned she was once part of a gospel singing quartet. Looking back

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



BearWise

Black bears are out and about. While people enjoy having them around, it's important to remember that these animals are wild. Sometimes, when you see the bear time and again you may feel a personal connection to that bear. That feeling is probably not reciprocated. Interactions with bears are inevitable to a certain level, so let's talk about what to do if you see a bear and the steps that you can take to make sure that your home doesn't become a playground for bears.

Firstly, it's important to remember that we live in an area with copious amounts of national forest. That means black bears are out there. Hopefully, though if you encounter one you'll know what to do or how to make your space less attractive to them. Bears will typically live 8 to 15 years. The females can weigh up to 300 pounds and the males over 500 pounds. The females will give birth in their den in late January. Those cubs will stay with the mother until the following spring when she kicks them out.

Bears are omnivores meaning that they eat whatever is easily available depending on the time of year. Their natural diet is berries, fruits, acorns, grasses, insects, and even mammals. Bears can be attracted by the smell of human food if there is not much natural food available for them. Bears are naturally afraid of humans. However, bears that have been feeding on human food lose their natural fear of people, and become a danger. Bears will usually remain in an area where food is readily available, so the best way to make sure that bears don't move into your backyard is to remove the sources of food.

Never feed bears either intentionally or unintentionally. They will learn where food is available and become a nuisance for you. Make sure that your garbage is in a place that they can't reach. That means leaving it inside the garage or if you're out camping hoisting your trash in the air or putting it in a bear proof trash can. Bird feeders can attract bears because of the high-calorie content in bird feed. Bring your bird feeders in when bears are active. Usually by the time bears are active there is plenty of natural food available for birds. Don't leave pet food out. Just give your outdoor pets enough food for one feeding. If you have a grill, clean and store it after use. Bears will be attracted by the smell of your grill so keep it out of reach for them. And finally, let your neighbors know if you see a bear so that they can take precautions too.

Most bears are not aggressive, unless they have been fed by humans before. Bear relocation is usually not an effective control option.

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Steve Rowe



Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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