

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Was She Friend or Foe?

Interesting history culminating on January 19, 1977 only 45 years ago. President Gerald Ford pardoned "Tokyo Rose", although

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



there were several Japanese women who broadcast propaganda ostensibly designed to break down American morale during our WWII effort against Japan. She was actually a Japanese-American, Iva Toguri, who was forced by the Japanese war machine to broadcast heart rendering American music, phony announcements and various propaganda statements in a sweet sounding female voice. She was born in Los Angeles, graduated from UCLA in 1940 with plans to become a doctor. Her biggest mistake, if you will, was living in Japan taking care of a sickly elderly aunt when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Only in possession of an identification card and no passport or actual proof of American citizenship and with WWII brewing her plans to return to America were impossible. As a Japanese-American she suffered the effects of racism while living in California, even as a natural born American citizen. Then alternatively the Japanese considered her an enemy and tried to get her to renounce her American citizenship. In her behalf she bravely refused to do so. Iva also requested to be interned as a foreign national, which was rejected. She truly had no country and

WAR was raging! Being on her own she became a translator for Radio Tokyo and in private she garnered the respect and trust of two Allied POWs who were forced to work at the radio station. Her phony broadcasts were written by those POWs who were tortured by the Japs, notorious for such activity and she then broadcast those fake reports of casualties and Allied troop activities. Upon the end of WWII in spite of being forced by the Japanese to read those falsified reports on air, she was imprisoned for one year in Japan, then released to the United States whereas immediately re-arrested for treason, sentenced to 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine by a judge who later admitted he hated the Japanese people. However in 1956 Toguri was released for good behavior and immediately sent back to Japan.

She never ceased to fight for a full pardon over 20 long hard years through three presidents, attorneys, and POWs that knew her during their tenure at Radio Tokyo. She finally made her capture, true story, and forced presence as a radio broadcaster known to our entire American public on an episode of "60 Minutes" in 1977 whereas President Ford granted her pardon before leaving office.

I believe she was truly one of the longest held POWs of WWII, imprisoned by both the Japanese and Americans. but she never gave up her fight for justice, truth and the American way. My feelings are that we need more folks with her strength of character who if put into a horrific fight for survival, adapted and then never would cease their fight for right.

-Semper Paratus

Crape Myrtle Pruning

Crape myrtles are a very common tree that many people like to plant in their home landscape or you may see them lining roads in towns. There are a couple of reasons why crape myrtles make great landscape trees. The first is that they are very disease and insect resistant, as there are not too many pests that will bother them. Powdery mildew is the most serious disease issue that crape myrtles will usually have, and it rarely kills the tree. Ambrosia beetles will attack crape myrtles, but generally they only attack trees that are already dead, dying, or stressed. Crape myrtles also come with a variety of flower colors, making them very attractive. Finally, crape myrtles come in a variety of sizes. Varieties range from dwarf to semi-dwarf to full size, meaning mature tree heights range from 3 to 30 feet tall.

Pruning is important for crape myrtles, because the blooms only form on new growth. Even more important is selecting the right sized variety for your location. If you select a variety that will grow to a good height for the spot where you're putting it, the pruning will not be difficult, because you won't be as concerned with managing the plant's size.

Now is a good time of year to prune your crape myrtles. Excessive pruning can lead to problems with disease and insects, because the tree is stressed. Bad pruning practices are called CRAPE MURDER. Crape murder generally involves topping the tree, or cutting back all the branches to 3 to 4 feet above the ground. This will result in an oddly shaped tree that produces a lot of suckers.

To properly prune a crape myrtle start at the base of the tree and work your way up. You're looking for suckers, if you find them prune those off. Once you get to where the branches are, remove crossing branches. Crossing branches will rub against each other when the wind blows and create sites where disease and insects can get in. As the tree grows you can remove branches from the lower third of the tree. Removing those branches will expose the trunk character. Some people like to prune off the old seedheads. I think they're an attractive feature. With new growth in the spring the old seedheads will fall off. On some varieties of crape myrtles you can prune in the summer after the blooms are spent to create another flush of flowers. A second bloom is difficult to force on varieties that bloom after mid-July.

A common misconception is that crape myrtles have to be pruned to produce flowers. This is not true. Pruning allows you to shape the tree. If you have a spot where the tree can grow and does not need shaping for space concerns, pruning is not necessary. I encourage everyone to do some research on finding the variety that will fit in the space that they have, because that will solve a lot of pruning issues before they arise. Pruning crape myrtles properly allows accentuates the natural beauty that they have.

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

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The Means and Modes of Consumption

I love this time of year in the mountains. Admittedly I could make that statement on any given day, but to those of us more suited to tranquility than bustle, the short pause between the holidays and the springtime return of tourists and part time residents is to be savored.

Winter has its charms as well. Stripped of their verdurous integument, the contours of the land are revealed in a testament to the grace and power of the divine hand which sculpted these old hills over years beyond imagination. Ephemeral creatures, we are drawn to the passing beauty of blossom and blade and the seasons of the leaf which make our lives seem longer by comparison, but we are humbled by the scope and scale of the tectonic.

Alas, the seasonal disrobing of the mountainsides reveals fresh scars and the brutality of wounds inflicted by our callousness. In a species so given to the ever evolving taboos imposed by popular opinion, why has it never been unthinkable to cut down a forest enjoyed by many to improve the view of a few? To gouge out the beating heart of a community of living things, destroy a vital symbiosis of clean air and water, and replace it with an inorganic box that houses our gadgets and oozes our toxins? Is it not enough to scrape and maim, flatten and pave? Must we then illuminate our work with the brightest lights we can find, flooding out from the valley to the mountaintop, dimming the moon and the stars?

When confronted by beauty and mystery there is, deeply imbedded in the heritage of western civilization the impulse to shoot it, stuff it and mount it on the wall. Technology has magnified our needfulness. We are the child that, seeking to possess the beauty we behold, crushes the flower in our ignorant grasp.

Yet beauty prevails here, in spite of us, and we still enjoy the charms of small communities and rural living. "It's not for everyone," Tracey said to me recently. "If you're going to move here, you'd better be comfortable with yourself and your spouse!" Especially in the winter months. The days are quiet. The nights are long, and when the view from the picture window grows stale, there is not an abundance of manmade distraction, compared to the city, to fill the void.

Working with adjudicated youth I was taught that when you take someone out of their accustomed environment, even if that environment is dysfunctional, they will try to recreate what is familiar. People move to the country to escape the problems of the city, and then they want the country to become more like what they left behind.

The longing for the familiar notwithstanding, mountains resist change. Here it takes 10,000 years to create an inch of topsoil. The people born here see no need to change the culture and traditions that sustained them through all the years of hardship and privation when they were isolated and forgotten by the rest of the world. You learn to make your own fun here. Country living and small town life is for neighbors and churches, digging in the ground and fishing in the stream, walking the hillsides and hiking the backcountry. As Wendell Berry wrote, "Where we live is also a place where our interest and our effort can be. But they can't be there by the means and modes of consumption."

Letters To The Editor

Who is He

Dear Editor,

A lot of churches don't seem to speak about the Holy Spirit, which is part of the Trinity, three in one. God the Father, His son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. You can't have just two because the three all work together to accomplish God's purpose and will for us all. Once a person receives Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, then the Lord God sends the Holy Spirit to live in each believer's heart to help us on our journey home to heaven.

To me the Holy Spirit is like a sidekick, like Tonto was to the Lone Ranger. Like Gabby Hayes was to Roy Rogers. Like peanut butter is to jelly. They just stick together through the thick and thin of life. What I love about the Holy Spirit is He is always there to see me through each daily grind and to give me wise counsel when needed. He also has all authority and power to command His presence and to seek His thoughts and ways which are higher than mine.

The Holy Spirit never sleeps. Never gets tired or grumpy. Never complains or gets upset when I do something wrong. But with tender loving care, He convicts me of my sin and get me back in tune with His purpose and will for me. The Holy Spirit never has to make excuses because He is perfect in all His ways. He never stumbles or loses sight of what His duties are in God's kingdom work. He is right on target with the right words to tell me when I go astray and want to do things my way, not God's ways.

The Holy Spirit is not just a helper but is also the dearest friend I will ever possess, like having a deputy on duty day and night to watch over me.

The Holy Spirit also brings me comfort and peace when I am faced with any kind of situation I can't handle. He is there to guide me through the difficulties of life and helps me to stay calm amid the storm that is brewing until the waves of adversity subside. The Holy Spirit to me is worth all the gold and silver in this universe, for He makes me happy and full of joy that wealth cannot buy. Do you know this Holy Spirit I speak of? If not, He is only a prayer or a breath away and He longs for you to come and become a part of something that exists now and forever in eternity. The Holy Spirit will never force Himself on you but will welcome you with open arms; if you will just come and believe upon the Name of Jesus Christ, you will be saved.
Frank F. Combs

Business and Home Safety

IBHS - Protecting Your Business from Wildfire: Today, we are visiting the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) in Richburg, SC. IBHS is a research facility where fire exposure to building materials and landscaping is tested. A very large indoor test center where they build a house on a turntable blow burning embers at the house with large fans to test effects on various types of landscaping and building materials.

RC&D
Frank Riley
 Executive Director



Wildfires are a risk throughout the U.S. and pose a significant threat to buildings and lives in wildfire-prone areas. As more and more businesses expand into the wildland-urban interface—or WUI, a term used to designate wildfire-prone areas where homes and businesses are also located—the wildfire risk to businesses will also grow. In this environment, business protection must take into account both the materials and design features of the building, as well as the selection, location, and maintenance of landscape plants, including grasses, shrubs, bushes, and trees.

This article by IBHS provides an overview of wildfire hazards, mitigation strategies, and useful resources to help protect buildings from the threat of wildfire. Most people associate wildfire damage with direct flame contact from the wildfire as it burns past the building. However, buildings also can be damaged or destroyed when they are exposed to burning embers and/or radiant heat. Building ignitions during wildfires occur when a component of a building is exposed to one or more of these three wildfire exposures.

Burning Embers - Burning embers and wind-blown burning embers in particular, are the most frequent cause of building ignitions. These embers are generated by the burning wildfire itself, as well as by combustible items the wildfire has previously ignited, such as landscape plants, which includes grasses, shrubs, bushes, and trees. Importantly, burning embers can travel for long distances before landing on or near a building. Embers can ignite buildings in several ways: Embers can ignite combustible construction materials directly when accumulating on or immediately adjacent to them. Combustible construction materials are those that ignite and burn such as wood, plastics, and wood-plastic products used in decking and siding. Embers can enter a building through openings, such as an open window or attic vent, and ignite combustible items inside the building.

Direct Flame Contact - Direct flame contact refers to actual flames from the wildfire coming into contact with buildings or combustible items attached to or near the building.

Radiant Heat - Fire generates radiant heat and if it is high enough and the duration is long enough, radiant heat can ignite a combustible product or break the glass in a window. Additionally, exposures to lower levels of radiant heat can preheat materials, making them easier to ignite from a direct flame contact exposure. Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) represent the wildfire hazard in a particular area based on an evaluation of the plants and landscaping, fire history, slope and other terrain features that may impact the growth and spread of fire. Building vulnerabilities are generally addressed on a component-by-component basis, and typically include the roof, exterior walls, windows, deck and other attachments, vents, and gutters, as well as design features that can affect the vulnerability of a given component.

Roofs - Since the roof is a large, relatively horizontal surface covering the building, it is often considered the most vulnerable component, particularly from an ember exposure perspective. Fire ratings for roof coverings are either Class A, B or C. IBHS recommends a Class A covering. For low-slope roofs, a Class A-rated roof cover includes testing and rating of the entire roof system assembly, which includes the roof cover, insulation, vapor or air barriers, and the type of deck.

Examples of roof systems considered to be Class A regardless of the deck type include built-up roofing and ballasted single-ply membranes. There are a number of Class A-rated steep-slope roof coverings, including asphalt composition shingles, clay tile and steel. Some Class A tile designs provide for an opening at the eave end and ridge. These openings should be plugged with a noncombustible material to minimize entry of embers in the area under the roof covering.

Windows - Using dual-paned windows with tempered glass will reduce the vulnerability of windows. Operational windows should have metal screens covering those sections that can open.

Vents - At a minimum, vents should be covered with 1/8-inch noncombustible metal, mesh screening. This will minimize the size of embers that can enter into the attic or crawlspace area. Vents that are perpendicular to the flow of wind, such as a gable end vent or those in under-eave blocking, are more vulnerable to ember entry. Ridge vents that are rated to resist the entry of wind-driven rain or vents in boxed-in under-eave construction are better options.

Exterior Walls - Noncombustible siding materials such as concrete and brick will provide the greatest fire protection from flames, embers, and radiant heat. The distance between the ground and the bottom of the siding on the exterior wall affects a building's vulnerability, particularly when walls are made of materials that can ignite.

Be Safe, be Aware and Be Firewise! For more information on wildfires, contact Frank Riley, Chestatee Chattahoochee RC&D @ www.info.ccrd@gmail.com

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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.*

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Classifieds SELL!
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Publication No: 635540

Advertising, News deadlines: Friday at 5 p.m.

Towns County (1 Year) \$30. Out of County (1 Year) \$40. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points. The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. **Postmaster:** Send change of address to: Towns County Herald, P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546.

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