

# SAR returns to meetings, welcomes wildland firefighter

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
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**YOUNG HARRIS** – The Sons of the American Revolution Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter hosted its return meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 10, at Brother's Restaurant, with compatriot Stephen Weaver as the featured speaker.

Weaver, one of 16 national certified wildland firefighter management leaders, shared experiences from his recent trip to Wyoming.

Now retired, Weaver is available for recall during national emergencies, and he spent much of the autumn battling blazes in the Medicine Bow Mountains of southeastern Wyoming and northern Colorado.

Last week's meeting also marked the first get-together for the Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter since COVID-19 hit in the spring. During the event, local SAR President Jared Ogden brought attendees up to speed with a list of the group's recent regional activities.

"I didn't want to have (a meeting) in September because we didn't have enough people willing to participate," Ogden said, "but I was so pleased with



**Sid Turner presented fellow Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter Sons of the American Revolution Compatriot Stephen Weaver with a Certificate of Appreciation in the group's November meeting.**

Photo by Todd Forrest

the positive response to the (November) meeting.

"It's been a long time since we've had a meeting, and we were able to participate in quite a few things. We encourage everyone to participate in the events if you can."

In July, the Blue Ridge Mountains Sons presented an appreciation plaque and a flag certificate to the Union County Sheriff's Office, and they did the same in early August in Gilmer County and Towns County.

The group also honored the Hiwassee and Blue Ridge police departments on Aug. 10, along with the Ellijay Police Department and Fannin County Sheriff's Office a week later.

On Aug. 15, the SAR joined the Daughters of the American Revolution to celebrate the passage of the 19th Amendment by honoring Mary Jane White, the first woman voter in Georgia.

The group was the recipient of a proclamation from Union County Sole Commis-

sioner Lamar Paris on Aug. 20 declaring Sept. 17-23 as Constitution Week, and in mid-September, members of the SAR presented the Traveling Trunk to the local Classical Conversations Homeschool Cooperative.

After attending the annual DAR picnic on Sept. 19, the SAR co-sponsored and took part in the Oct. 3 patriot grave marking in Dawsonville.

Following a meal from Brother's and other SAR business, Weaver took center stage to discuss the recent wildfires. He opened by explaining the unpredictable fall weather in Wyoming at 6,000-plus feet above sea level.

"Whenever you go out West in September, you're going to get snow," he said. "As it turns out, when I left out of Denver on Oct. 25, it was in a snowstorm."

According to Weaver, he was one of the 1,200 people assigned to combat the fires, and he saw five straight days of intense firefighting covering 177,000 acres.

"Over my career, 100,000-acre fires really aren't anything anymore, but we had

three red-flag wind events," he said. "I've been in a few hurricanes, and during one of those wind events, it reminded me of that."

After Weaver's address, the SAR concluded the eve-

ning with its business meeting, featuring the officers' reports, approval of minutes from the March meeting, and a confirmation of the Dec. 12 Christmas party.

## Armistice Day...from Page 1A

on behalf of a grateful nation, thank you for your service.

"May God bless you and your families. May God bless all those on this day who wear the uniform and stand ready, and may God continue to bless the United States of America."

Following a short Armistice Day history and brief readings from past Armistice Day speeches, organizers put out white memorial crosses, each with a name, near the property's flags in honor of departed veterans.

At 11 a.m., the service flags, the Georgia flag and the American flag were replaced with new ones and raised before a closing prayer concluded the event.

Ladd and Schue of National Veteran Resources were there with their instantly recognizable RV as part of a cross-country trip to raise awareness about military suicide.

At each of their stops, Ladd and Schue request that veterans sign their names on the RV that is now covered in the signatures of hundreds of American heroes.

National Veteran Resources aggregates tools to prevent suicide by supplying support through coaching, mentorship, education, face-to-face visits, and referrals to other organizations including facilities, equine therapy, holistic therapy, service dog therapy and many other resources.

As part of their mission,



**On Nov. 11, local veterans Bruce Anrig and Walter B. Kerr signed the National Veteran Resources RV owned and operated Michelle Ladd, pictured in back.**

Photo by Todd Forrest

Ladd and Schue require each veteran to take a pledge before signing the RV that they will always ask for help if needed.

"We are so grateful to each and every one of (our veterans for their) sacrifice to our country," said Ladd, who is the mother of two veterans and is engaged to another. "My whole life is traveling the country to raise awareness (about) the 22 veterans that die every day by suicide."

"We have committed our lives to visiting American Legions, VFWs, the DAV and

vet centers around the country to help raise awareness. We are currently on a 3,500-mile tour and are going on week five with a few more to go. This trip is dedicated to mothers that have lost their veteran sons and daughters to suicide."

Ladd and her RV have been through the area before, and National Veteran Resources will undoubtedly return for future trips. For additional info on National Veteran Resources, visit <https://nationalveteranresources.com>.

## Granddaddy Mimm's...from Page 1A

excited for the public to see what they've done with the place.

"We've turned one side into offices and a conference room, and the biggest part into the bar, tasting room and gift shop," Townsend said. "We've decorated it in the theme I had always pictured it being, kind of your old speakeasy saloon; I guess you'd call it 'Outlaw Farmhouse.'

"In the very back building is our production area, where our stills, mash fermenting and bottling all take place by longtime moonshiner and Master Distiller Dillard Canup, and by up-and-coming distiller Michael Kimsey."

Just off the Blairsville Square, convenience is another big benefit of the new location, including expanded onsite and downtown parking. And the business will retain its regular days of operation of Monday through Saturday, opening at 11 a.m.

Townsend said he's looking forward to hosting a Grand Opening celebration in the springtime with a major concert to herald the return of indoor/outdoor live entertainment at Granddaddy Mimm's, which has been on hold everywhere due to COVID-19.

Of course, Townsend said his company will maintain COVID-19 best practices in its commitment to providing a safe experience for all customers.

"We hope this will add to Downtown Blairsville's tourism," Townsend said. "We want to thank the city for accepting us into Downtown Blairsville. We're excited to be here and are thankful for all the support the county and everybody has given us over the years."



**Tommy took a photo of his dad Roy, Friday "to document the first legal moonshine bottled in the city limits of Blairsville."**

Photo/Tommy Townsend

Development Authority Executive Director Mitch Griggs has been working closely with the Waymore's Outlaws front man Tommy Townsend since the beginning of Granddaddy Mimm's, and he said everyone is thrilled with the company's continued growth and relocation.

"Granddaddy Mimm's has completed quite the transformation of the venerable building into its new facility while taking care to maintain the building's charm and historic character, which is important to our community aesthetic," Griggs said.

Continuing, "Granddaddy Mimm's is an important part of our and the Downtown Development Authority's revitalization efforts and will be a big draw for locals and

visitors to the downtown area.

"We thank Tommy and everyone on his team for all they do for Blairsville and Union County, and we're looking forward to great moonshine and music."

Darren Harper of Blairsville DDA echoed Griggs' excitement, saying Townsend and his Granddaddy Mimm's Distilling Co. were a welcome addition to the Downtown Blairsville family of businesses.

"Tommy and his family have deep roots in Union County, and it wouldn't be the same without them – or their moonshine," Harper said. "We look forward to working with Granddaddy Mimm's in our effort to make the downtown a welcoming and fun place for all."