

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Green Address Marker

Was there ever a time when you couldn't find a friend's house? They gave you directions... turn left here, look for this, go three miles... but you still couldn't find it? GPS can even send you on a wild goose chase. Now, imagine that there is an emergency and finding this house could be a matter of life or death.

Over the many years of working Fire and EMS, locating people's houses was a challenge. The greatest improvement for finding houses in Union County was the remapping and the placement of the green marker, with address numbers, at the driveway of each home or building.

The remapping, readdressing, and placing the green address marker throughout the county was a major change. It was started in 2009 using SPLOST funds.

Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris stated that it was a difficult decision but a decision that has standardized our address numbering system. This address numbering system has greatly assisted the emergency services in locating your home.

Commissioner Paris also wanted a standardized marker for each address which can be easily seen by responding units. The green address markers are provided and installed by the county.

When the county was remapped, every road was plotted, and a number was assigned for every 5.28 feet on both sides of the road. That number became the new address for that building. The numbers on the right are even numbers and the numbers on the left are odd numbers. The number system can also help determine the distance from the beginning of the road to the house because every 1000 numbers equals one mile. So for example, if your address is 2604, you are 2.6 miles from the beginning of your road.

The green address markers make it easier for emergency services to locate your home in an emergency. The markers are used by the fire department, ambulance service and the law enforcement. They are also used by delivery services such as FedEx and UPS.

It is very important to have the green address markers posted at your home and that they are visible. We ask home owners to not move their address marker; plant vegetation or otherwise block the view of the markers.

If you need an address marker or if yours is damaged, please

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Jesus Loves Me

Theologian Karl Barth was a rebel. In the early 20th century, he rejected the popular new idea that the historical Jesus does not matter to Christians. Just prior to WWII, his rebellion took a dangerous turn. As a leader of Germany's confessing church, he wrote a declaration that the church's allegiance to Jesus meant it had to reject the Fuhrer's version of church. He personally mailed the document to Hitler. He was a prolific writer and produced some of the last century's most influential works of theology. Yet when asked to describe his most profound thought, he paused and replied, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

The phrase that focused the thought of Barth originated with Anna Warner. Miss Warner's family lived on Constitution Island just across from the U.S. Military Academy in West Point. She wrote novels and poems, and led Bible studies for the cadets. One of her novels, "Say and Seal," published during the Civil War, included a poem to comfort a sick child. Barth quoted the first line, and you know the rest. "Little ones to Him belong, they are weak but He is strong." William Bradbury composed the tune and added the refrain.

The Bible does speak much of God's love. Such as, "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:9-11). God's manifest love means you live and love others.

Stuart Townend is a modern hymn writer. One day he began to reflect on a new tune, and pondered words to fit it. He was attracted to the idea of telling the story of Christ and the cross from the perspective of what it cost the Father. So he did. "How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure, that He should give His only son to make a wretch His treasure. How great the pain of searing loss - the Father turns His face away, as wounds which mar the Chosen One bring many sons to glory."

Townend, Bradbury, Warner, and Barth all speak with one voice. The Christian faith is about the love of God. His love is evident in the life He chose to invest in you, and in the world He

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. What are the different facilities and programs that Union General Hospital, Inc. operates?

A. Union General Hospital, Inc. operates the following facilities: Union General Hospital and Nursing Home, Union County Dialysis Center, Union General Wellness Center, Union General Child Care Center, Union General ENT Solutions, Union General Hospital Suches Clinic, Union General Orthopedics, Union General Pediatrics, Union General Urology, Union General Women's Health, The Clinic at Walmart, Blue Mountain Family Practice, and the Glenda Gooch House. Union General Hospital, Inc. also owns and operates a number of facilities in Towns County: Chatuge Regional Hospital and Nursing Home, Chatuge Behavioral Care, Chatuge Interventional Pain Solutions, Chatuge Medical Group, Clearview at Chatuge, Clearview Center Senior Wellness, Union General Hospital Young Harris Clinic, and Hayesville Family Practice in Clay County, North Carolina. Some of the many programs Union General Hospital Inc. offers are sleep study lab, wound care and hyperbaric, cardiopulmonary rehab and an in-house pathology department. The organization employs approximately 1,300 people in this area making Union General not just a hospital, but a complex Healthcare system that is one of the best rural facilities in the country, much less Georgia.

Q. We read in the North Georgia News a couple of weeks ago about a fine to the hospital from the federal government. Do they have the money to pay this fine, and will it negatively impact the operation of the hospital?

A. The fine that was paid to the government was \$5 million. Obviously, this would negatively impact any business. However, since the hospital had been preparing for this eventual fine for some time, they were able to pay the fine without borrowing any money. It will not impact their operations.

Q. Did any current hospital board members have knowledge of the serious allegations made concerning alleged illegal financial activities at the hospital?

A. I am not aware of any of them having this knowledge prior to their notification by law enforcement. The hospital staff

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Resources in The Community

Union County has several resources available for drug prevention, drug treatment and support during times of crisis. These services are often free and easy to access but often people do not know that they are available.

Drug Free Mountain Life has an arrangement with Alpha Drug Testing and New Hope Counseling of Blairsville to provide free drug screens for teens. If you suspect your adolescent or teen of drug use, these agencies will provide a drug screen and documented results. All records are confidential, and information cannot be shared unless a release of information is provided by the parent or guardian. Contact Alpha Drug Testing, (866) 588-7878 or New Hope Counseling of Blairsville, (706) 745-4066 for more information about these services.

Bi-Annually, Drug Free Mountain Life and

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The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

Letters to the Editor

Pro-Life Observation

Dear Editor,
Strange, all who support abortion are alive. Just saying.
Cindy Mae Tidwell

Ignorance is not Bliss

Dear Editor,
In a recent issue of the newspaper, a writer seemed to imply that Planned Parenthood is all about abortion. The writer is wrong, and is obviously suffering with what might be called intellectual laziness. The facts are that less than 3 percent of all services provided by Planned Parenthood (PP) have anything to do with abortion. Three-fourths of PP clients receive services to prevent unintended pregnancies, which amounts to about 584,000 pregnancies averted each year. Nearly five million people each year (worldwide) are provided with sexual and reproductive health care and education, and 70 percent of those clients live below the poverty line. So before one castigates an organization like Planned Parenthood, the facts should be checked, as opposed to believing blow-hard politicians and preachers, and other lazy intellectuals.

Along with more than eight million others, I am a longtime supporter of PP and other reproductive health organizations; I support women making their own reproductive choices, rather than old men and politicians.

Lowell Parks

Before I Formed You In The Belly

Dear Editor,
Abraham Lincoln said: "America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves." He also posited the following: "How many legs does a dog have if you call the tail a leg? Four. Calling a tail a leg doesn't make it a leg."

The sum total of American war casualties since the founding of our country pales in comparison to the number of deaths that have occurred in mothers' wombs since the passage of Roe v. Wade. To the abortionist, this new life is called a fetus. Does that make it less human? How many potential Henry Fords, Thomas Edisons, or Steve Jobs have befallen this fate? How many cures for cancer or inventors of vaccines have died before working the first day in the lab?

America is traveling down a road of destruction today, and we're destroying ourselves. We're so blinded by prosperity that we call a baby a fetus and now have laws passed in New

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Plan for the Great Escape

The two main wildfire seasons here in the North Georgia mountains are November and March-April. In November the weather is typically dry with leaves falling creating fuel. Adding to the danger, many of our residents flee back to warmer parts in the fall so their homes are left unattended and unprotected. March and April are the end of Winter when the plants have not turned green, the fall leaves are still piled up on the unprotected homes, and the spring winds are blowing all of which makes for a volatile fuel mixture just waiting for a small spark to start a wildfire in your backyard or worse down the slope coming up to your house. Do you know that fire moves up slope 16 times faster than on a flat surface? Imagine what it would be like trying to get out of the way of an out-of-control wildfire racing up slope towards your house!

The local Firewise Citizen's Coalition and the County Fire Rescue want to make sure you know what to do in the event of a wildfire. Do you have an early warning system to alert you of a fire in your home? If your smoke alarm goes off do you know what to do? What if you have a fire in your home? Will you have time to get out? You should have a working smoke detector, a minimum of one on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms. This will give you the time you need to get out. Remember to change your smoke detector batteries twice a year. A good rule of thumb is to change your batteries when you change your clocks, for daylight savings time.

Have a home escape plan:

Know two ways out of every bedroom. Have an escape ladder for bedrooms on the second floor. Plan a special meeting place for family members outside your home; mail box or a large tree. Never go back inside a burning building. Once you're out stay out! Call the fire department from a neighbor's house or cell phone, never call from inside your home; the time it takes for you to call may be the time you need to get out. Know your address to ensure emergency responders can find your home quickly. Make sure address numbers are visible for emergency responders to find your house. Have a family fire drill and practice an escape plan. This will help your family in the event a fire starts in or around your home.

The Firewise Citizens Coalition works hard to make your community safer from a wildfire by encouraging all residents to reduce the fuel around their homes and by educating them about the risks where they live and the measures

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RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



Speck Fishing

One of my favorite enjoyments is what is called "Speck Fishing." Speckled Trout derive their name from the specks that cover their body. In other parts of our country the fish are called "Brook Trout" or "Brookies." The fish generally require cold, clean water and they do not tolerate "Rainbow Trout" well. These tend to prey upon the Specks. These little fish are Georgia's only native trout. As a matter of fact when John Muir traveled through Trackrock Gap all those years ago he noticed many smaller Trout in the creeks of the area. Later it was determined these minnows were actually Specks. Since that time the territory of our native Speckled Trout has decreased significantly.

The introduction of Rainbow Trout and the development of much of our land have both decreased our water quality and placed extraordinary pressure upon our only native trout. Now to catch this species you must travel into the high caves and above waterfalls underneath many of our high mountains. My good friend Patrick Fix loves to Speck fish as much as I and this is a story from his childhood. Patrick, his cousin and his father, Bill Fix, were Speck fishing somewhere around Blue Mountain. Patrick said I can still remember watching Dad walk through the rhododendron thickets. He carried a small fishing rod and on his back was a day pack containing water and a small frying pan. When the trio caught enough fish they would grease up a pan and build a fire. Next all the fish were rolled in corn meal and fried along with some potatoes. It was a way to spend a day with your son and nephew.

Late in the afternoon the trio came to a long cascading waterfall. The falls were not free falling, but, more of a long chute with potholes placed intermittently through the 100 foot drop. Actually, the waterfall was in the shape of an s-curve much like a water slide you might see at an amusement park. Bill Fix looked at the two young boys and said, "that blue granite is to slick for my liking, so I am going around this fall to the bottom and fish that big hole." So, Bill and his nephew disappeared around a point while Patrick sat looking at a pothole halfway down the waterfall.

I don't think Patrick has ever met anything he is afraid of and the more he looked at the pothole the more he wondered if it contained a record "Speck." So, carefully he crept through the boulders navigating his way down the waterfall to the pothole. At one point he was standing on a flat topped boulder about 3 feet wide and 30 feet tall with nothing but other sharp boulders

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Chamber of Commerce

Last Thursday night, we had the honor of hosting a gala to recognize our outstanding students in Union County. Traditionally, the STAR student and STAR teacher are recognized at The Evening with the Stars event. However, this year we wanted to broaden our scope to include other notable students in our high school, so we collaborated with the Union County School Board to identify and recognize excellence in a variety of areas. It is with great esteem that I share the award winners from last week's evening.

The recipients of the awards were as follows: Reaching for the Stars Award - Ben Taylor; Steller Staff Award - Mandilyn Moore; Community Service Star Award - Ashley Palmateer; Alumni Pacesetter Award - Matthew Eford; Shining Star Award - Sahory Salazar; All Star Panther Award - Madison Yost; Rising Star Award - Ernest Waldrop

And the Star Students are: Audrey Justice

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Green in Winter

Most of the landscape around is brown and has been for months now. Some weeds have been coming up since the fall that make the ground dotted with green. Let's talk about these weeds and how to identify them. We'll also discuss different ways to control them.

Henbit, common chickweed, and speedwell are all annual weeds. The issue with winter weeds is that they can slow down the growth of desirable plants in the spring. The winter weeds are bigger and stronger than other low growing plants early in the spring. This size advantage means they shade desirable plants around them and use the nutrients that are in the soil. This can lead to difficulties with summer weeds, because the winter annuals reduce the competitiveness of your desirable plants.

Henbit is a weed that is in the mint family, Lamiaceae. You can easily tell the mint family because the plants have opposite leaves and a four-sided stem. If you roll the stem between your fingers, you can feel the ridges on each side. The leaves for henbit attach directly to the stem. It has small pinkish-purple flowers at the top of the plant that are in a tube shape.

Common chickweed is another plant that has opposite leaves. Chickweed has small white flowers and is in the Caryophyllaceae family, commonly called the carnation family. It usually grows about 3-6 inches tall. The seeds from chickweed can remain viable for up to 10 years. There are a couple of different species of chickweed out there. Mouseear chickweed has hairy leaves and stems.

Speedwell is a clumping plant that has very small bluish-purple flowers. It grows in patches up to one foot in size. The upper leaves on speedwell are narrow, while the lower leaves are more rounded. It is in the Scrophulariaceae family, which is also the family that has weedy plantains. There are several different species of speedwell, but they all have the same general characteristics.

When controlling weeds it's best to start by looking at your site. Knowing the pH and nutrients that are in your soil by taking a soil test through your local extension office is a good place to start. Then think about the drainage of your site. Sloped sites will drain more quickly. Does the soil need mulch to maintain soil moisture and add organic matter? If your site is in good condition and properly cared for and you are still having weed issues, then it might be time to start thinking about using an herbicide to control weeds.

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UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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Kenneth West
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Editor

Derek Richards
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Todd Forrest
Sports Editor

Mark Smith
Staff Writer

Website: www.nganews.com

Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com

Mailing: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514

Lowell Nicholson
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Phone: 706-745-6343 Fax: 706-745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514