

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Safety Consciousness

In light of the recent terrible and unusual events that have happened over the last couple of weeks, there has been uncertainty and anxiety over safety. This is understandable. No matter which side of the issue you fall on, all points of view should be acknowledged and respected. Although there will never be a place where anyone can 100% guarantee safety, we can take comfort in the fact that a great deal of effort is placed on providing a safe environment for all. Public safety and other organizations dedicate significant amounts of time, funding, and resources into safety such as equipment, training, buildings, facilities, and awareness.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Public safety and other organizations can only do so much; it also takes an effort from each individual to help provide safety. This effort is in two main forms. First, each person is individually responsible for his or her own safety. That includes being aware, learning various safety and preparedness activities, and having the knowledge and equipment to provide that safety.

The second thing that an individual is responsible for is assisting public safety organizations by being aware and reporting suspicious activity. The suspicious activity can be just about anything that doesn't seem quite right or may be indications of criminal or terroristic activity. There is a national campaign that addresses this something, and it is referred to as "If You See Something; Say Something."

The state of Georgia has the "See Something, Send Something" App that can be used to report suspicious activity. According to the Georgia Department of Public Safety website, "See Something, Send Something" provides a platform to capture a photo of suspicious activity or send in information with written text. Information received in the app is sent directly to the Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis Center (GISAC) where the tips can be evaluated and provided to law enforcement across the state as needed. The application is available at no cost for iPhone and Android phone users, as well as iPad users.

We all want our friends, family, and loved ones to be safe, however; we live in an imperfect world. As long as there is evil, there is an element of danger. We must place faith into the organi-

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The Light Rocks

Alice Cooper, the "Godfather of Shock Rock," shocked the music world when he announced he had become a Christian. He believes he is part of an inevitable spiritual awakening. "Humanity is craving for answers," he said. "There is something better... If you don't feel it now, you will. Trust me."

He calls himself in his former life the "poster boy for moral decay." He said, "I've got a lot to be forgiven for... out of ignorance." Don't we all? In Biblical parlance, you walk in darkness or light. "If anyone walks in the day," Jesus said, "he does not stumble because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles because the light is not in him" (John 11:9-10).

To walk in the light of Christ is to live a changed, repentant life. And that can cost you. It cost Zaccheus, the corrupt tax collector, a pledge to return his ill-gotten gains. To walk in the light of Christ means having courage to face cultural headwinds. Daniel prayed in front of his open window three times a day in defiance of those who would restrict his religious freedom.

Standing against the cultural headwinds of our day can cost you friends, respect, and more. To call out some of those headwinds, scientism is the belief that science will answer all significant questions. Politicism is the belief that government should provide all necessary solutions. Expressive individualism counsels you to look inside for your authentic (and quite subjective) truth. Reinvented religion de-scandalizes Christianity so that it conforms with the cultural mood. That's not "contend(ing) earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3). The repentant life means walking in faith and in God's truth and accepting the resulting cost.

Trusting God and doing right things takes courage. When Jesus said to walk in the day, he was walking toward Jerusalem to face the cross. Daniel saw the shadow of death in the face of a lion. Zaccheus risked losing face when he admitted his fraud. For Alice Cooper, it means having the courage to publicly head out in a new direction, even with his music. The lyrics of his 2011 song, "I Am Made of You," express his Godward journey. "In the beginning I was blind, living in a world devoid of light.

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. I came to the office to see you, but you were not there. If you aren't in the office, how can we find you?

A. It is true that I do not hold regular office hours. That's why it is important to make an appointment. Though it is hard to know where you might find me on a given day or time, I will try to give some examples of where I might be.

Roads: Road situations that involve high costs require my input; therefore, I may be out looking at roads and road surfaces. In some of these cases, I may also be meeting with individual residents who live on a specific road.

Local Organizations: Local clubs and organizations sometimes ask me to give a short state of the county talk. Some organizations meet in the morning; some meet at lunchtime; and some meet in the evening. Examples of some of these might be Rotary, Kiwanis, Veterans Organizations, and the Retired Teachers Association.

Local Boards: Union County is a very generous county with many organizations serving different causes. I may attend an Emergency Food and Shelter Board for Towns/Union Counties, Alcohol Board Meeting, a Short-term Rental Board meeting, Union County Board of Health, or a Development Authority Board meeting just to name a few. I don't attend all meetings on a regular basis, but I do like to keep in touch.

Regional, Statewide, & National Meetings: I am a member of the Statewide Police Officer Standards & Training Council (POST) Certification Committee that meets quarterly. I am on the National Association of Counties (NACo) Environment, Energy & Land Use Steering Committee. I am a past President and currently serving on the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) Nominating Committee, and I am a Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Center (GMRC) Council Member. Some might question the importance of serving at regional, state or national levels. Union County's issues of concern are important. These types of organizations facilitate in-depth discussions, thorough analysis, and recommend informed decision-making on critical matters that can impact Union County.

SPLOST Consultants & Engineers: When it comes to proj-

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris

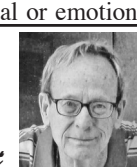


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Becoming

Solid friendships promote each other "becoming" one's best whether it involves the job one has, or one's personal growth. Friends become cheerleaders to one another - it doesn't stop. A friend becomes excited and joyful when one's friend is becoming successful. Whether it's the friend reaching a personal goal or emotionally overcoming a heartache, the bottom line is that the individual is becoming victorious. For the individual who is in the midst of the positive aspect of "becoming" as a goal, one's self-esteem, self-worth, and self-image are deeply enhanced. The individual can actually feel the quality and value of the improvement.

Successful Mental Health
Dr. James Ray Ashurst
PH.D.



As one lives in a daily perpetual state of "becoming," one can recognize with amazement and breath-taking wonderment the awesome positive change towards others and within oneself. In turn, other individuals will also notice the change and may even express to you the positive difference that they see in you. The "becoming"

See Ashurst, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Will we...

Dear Editor,
If one pays attention to the political polls, it appears that our country is nearly evenly divided on presidential preference. That would indicate that on November 6 (or whenever recounts are completed), at least half the population is going to be disappointed/unhappy/outraged - take your pick.

Our behavior at that point will give testimony to our character as a republic. Will we stand in the street and scream? (We've seen that.) Will we dream of blowing up the White House? (We've seen that.) Will we organize protest marches? (We've seen that.) Will we take pictures of a beheaded victor? (We've seen that.)

I would hope we would forego the drama, lick our wounds, get back to business, pray for our country, and pray for the new administration to make wise decisions.

Carol McKechnie

Neighbors in the End

Dear Editor,
I must say that I'm appalled by the people in our community who continually try to use their religious faith, or their particular interpretation of scripture, to justify their political choice and vilify another.

There are over 200 various Christian denominations in the U.S. alone. No doubt, each thinks their belief system is the correct one, and loves to write letters to the editor championing their particular candidate and calling people names who disagree.

I find it incredibly ironic (and somewhat hilarious) that adults feel it's OK to violate every rule we teach children - be kind, don't call names, don't tell lies, treat others as you would want to be treated - in the name of politics. And

See Hadaway, page 5A

Stones & Glass Houses

Dear Editor,
As the old saying goes, don't throw stones if you live in a glass house. So many of your letter writers feel free to condemn Democrats for supporting a woman's right to reproductive freedom. They freely spread a false narrative that we endorse "on a whim" abortion regardless of the gestation period. They accuse us of being immoral, corrupt, and ungodly, and berate us for working to ensure LGBT rights. Not to mention that they seem to believe we will hijack democracy if we win this election.

But these same writers, apparently without hesitation or reflection, are ready and willing to vote for one of the most immoral characters

See Psiaki page 5A



Letters to the Editor

Vote 2024

Dear Editor,
I heard a pastor the other night on TV talk about the upcoming election from a biblical perspective. This is my take on it. When you go vote, don't just vote for any party until you check out each candidate's agenda - what they stand for and who they stand with. Don't just look at their personality but look deep into what their beliefs are. Are they for "We The People," or for their own personal gain and power over the people? Yes, both candidates have flaws and are imperfect like the rest of us, but in the long run, which one has the best interest at heart for our beloved land of the brave and free?

If one party believes it's OK to kill babies in the womb and agrees with same-sex marriage and that kids growing up can be anything they want to be, then why would one vote for that candidate, especially when the other candidate speaks against abortion and espouses marriage according to God's commands, which has always been one man and one woman in holy matrimony? Another aspect to look at is their leadership. What does each candidate bring to the table that will lead our nation to be great again, instead

See Combs, page 5A

Electoral College

Dear Editor,
In the Sept. 4 Letters to the Editor, a writer proposed three changes to our election system. The proposals were making election day a paid national holiday, limiting campaigning to 90 days before an election and abolishing the Electoral College.

I wish to disagree with abolishing the Electoral College. Does the writer understand the governmental system of the United States? Does he understand that the United States is a Constitutional Republic and has never been a Democracy? Does he know that we refer to the United States Government as a Federal Government because it is a federation of independent sovereign states?

The United States was not formed as a Democracy for many reasons, but prime among them is the instability of pure democracies. Also, since the states were forming a federation, the small states were concerned with being ruled by the large states. A compromise was reached giving the legislative branch two houses: the House, with membership based on population, and a Senate with membership equal for all states. Therefore, all laws passed must have the approval of the House, based on population, and approval of the Senate with equal representation for each state.

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Great Memories

My grandfather loved being in the woods. Papa always felt at ease there and loved seeing the blooming native azaleas (he called them honeysuckle). He loved picking up buckeyes and listening to a Woodpecker banging on a tree. Sometimes we would sit by a creek where he would laugh out loud and begin telling us about some of his favorite memories. After listening to Papa, I realized just how short life is, and I thought about many of my own great memories.

Many of my fondest memories are centered on my family. For example, when I was a little boy we moved up north to the windy city of Chicago. I was desperately homesick, and right before Christmas Uncle Bud sent me a brand new pair of cowboy boots. I don't know why, but, those boots are etched in my memory. They were one of the first Christmas presents I can remember receiving. I also remember finding orange slices, candy canes, and Brazil nuts under a Red Cedar Christmas Tree. To this day I can't resist buying those candied orange slices. I guess that is why I enjoy going to Foodland in Blairsville. The Abercrombies are good about keeping me supplied with those orange slices.

Another great memory involves my Papa and Granny. Papa and I were out squirrel hunting in late November. We were walking around the top of a bluff when Papa said, "Come over here, I want to show you something." Papa was standing next to a massive Beech Tree. As I walked closer, he pointed to the following initials, "CBC + GMC" (Columbus Bueron Cummings + Glenna Mae Cummings). Papa had carved these initials into the tree sometime in the late 1930s. I found my Dad's and Uncle's initials carved into another Beech Tree about 25 feet from the first tree. So, I carved my initials into the same tree, and when my sons were born I carved their initials into the same tree.

Other memories involve farming of crops and livestock. Papa was a cotton farmer, and the very first money I ever earned was by picking cotton. The bag was bigger than I was at the time. I picked 4-5 pounds and at the end of the day we all weighed our bags. My Papa paid me 5 cents for my bag of cotton. I remember being disappointed. But, I learned that you get out of life what you put into it. Another time I helped Granny dig a bunch of potatoes in her garden. It was a bumper crop, and those potatoes were some of the largest I

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Sweet Sorghum

Fall feels like it is here. Sweet sorghum in the fall is part of culture and history in the mountains. It used to be more common and there were sorghum mills scattered all over the place. There are still a few people who grow sweet sorghum for syrup and carry on the tradition. Today let's talk about the history of sorghum, how it's grown, and how it's turned into syrup.

Sorghum is a member of the grass family. It originated in Northeastern Africa. Sorghum has been bred to fulfill four different modern day uses. Grain sorghum is used for flour. Forage sorghum is used to feed livestock. Biomass sorghum is used for bioenergy. Sweet sorghum is used for sorghum syrup. Sorghum made its way to America in the 1850s. Today, the Southeast, and particularly Appalachia, is known for sorghum syrup production.

Sorghum syrup production has declined over the years. This decline is largely due to its production being heavily labor intensive. Production has also declined as other glucose syrups have taken over. However, recently sorghum syrup has seen a bit of a resurgence with the increased interest in locally made products.

Sorghum is an important crop because it performs well under adverse soil conditions or drought. It does not require a lot of fertilizer, and adding too much nitrogen to the soil will decrease sugar levels. Typically sorghum is planted in May and ready to harvest at mid-September through early October. Weeds can be an issue with sorghum because it grows very slowly at the beginning of the season, giving the weeds a chance to grow up around it.

Sugarcane aphid is the biggest challenge of growing sweet sorghum. Sugarcane aphid is an invasive species that is resistant to many different insecticides, making it very difficult to control. It overwinters in south Florida and moves northward each year. If left untreated, sugar cane aphids will destroy a field of sorghum. When they start to arrive, you will see hundreds of them clustered on a plant, and they will feed off that plant until it dies and move onto the plant next to it. There are websites that are used to track the movement of sugarcane aphids northward each year to let growers know when they need to begin the treatment.

The key to producing good syrup is to have a high Brix level in the sorghum stalks. Brix is a measurement of sugar in an aqueous solution. One degree Brix is 1 gram of sucrose in 100 grams of aqueous solution. Deheading, or removing the seed head at the top of the plant

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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ects involving SPLOST funds, there are many meetings with consultants and engineers during the planning phases.

I hope this helps Union County residents have a better understanding of what is expected by a commissioner. I try to spend time at Rec Dept activities, at the Farmers Market, and at other events that are hosted by Union County Government. Not every week requires 80 hours of official worktime, but many do.

This is a sample of one very recent weekend: Friday Night - 6:30 PM - Football Field. Program recognizing Rec Dept Teams & Cheerleaders.

Saturday Night: 9 AM - Football Field for 1st grade Rec Dept Football; 10 AM - Farmers Market; 11 AM - Football Field for 2nd grade Rec Dept Football; 12 PM - Farmers Market; 12:30 PM - Football Field for 3rd/4th grade Rec Dept Football; 2 PM - Funeral Home Viewing; 4 PM - 90th Birthday Party.

As you can see, evening hours, weekend hours, and holiday hours often find me out in the community talking with and celebrating with Union County residents. Investing time in our community is one of the most rewarding parts of the job.

Hadaway... continued from Page 4A

that's exactly what it is. People can try to disguise their vote in faith, but it's all politics. And politics is all about money and power. So tell yourself what you will, but if you think God is invested in one party over another as they pursue money and power, you need to return to the basics of scripture.

At the end of the day, we'll have a president who is supposed to serve the Constitution for ALL citizens. Those who voted for her (or him) and those who didn't. The president

must defend the rights of people of all faiths, and people of no religious faith. "Love your neighbor" doesn't mean only those who look like you, worship like you, believe like you, or hate like you.

So take a step back, campaign all you want and remember that on November 6, we'll all still be here in Union County living next door to one another. If your candidate loses, how will you want to be treated?

Melanie Hadaway

Psiaki... continued from Page 4A

this country has ever seen. It doesn't seem to faze them that he is a serial adulterer and cheated on all of his wives, including his current one. Does it matter to them that he has cheated craftsmen out of their wages after they finish the job? That certainly seems immoral to me. And what about all the lies he tells? Hundreds of fact checkers have proven over and over that he is a serial liar.

He is all over the map on abortion. He has many gay friends and it's doubtful he will push to eliminate any freedoms

they have been granted so far. But who knows what he really believes about anything?

Something we do know is that he incited an insurrection on January 6th, 2021, to overthrow the peaceful transfer of power, the bedrock of our democracy.

If your writers are going to so freely vote for this immoral character, they need to be more careful about what they accuse the Democrats of, but then, isn't that the definition of hypocrite?

Steve Psiaki

Peterson... continued from Page 4A

Our Electoral College is based on this compromise, with the major portion of the delegates based on population and another portion based on equality between the states. Abolishing the Electoral College and replacing it with a popular democratic vote gives the power of choosing the president to just a few large states while states like Wyoming, North and South Dakota, and Alaska would be completely irrelevant to the election of our President.

This change would result in the end of a Federal Government of sovereign states and a tyranny of large states over the small states. We are already close to this tyranny today. Look at the red vs blue map. How many states are red and how many are blue? Are we not already dominated by the large states?

Leave the Electoral College alone. Understand why the Founding Fathers structured our government as they did.

Vincent Peterson

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

As Fall approaches, we want to keep you informed that we receive around 20 calls daily asking about the peak leaf season. While we can't pinpoint the exact date, the leaves typically start changing from mid-October to early November.

If you want to keep an eye out to see when the leaves begin to change, we offer two webcams providing

live footage from Blairsville: one at Butternut Golf Course with a panning view, and the other downtown with multiple angles of the vibrant town square.

*Please note the downtown webcam is temporarily down but will be back soon. Visit our website at www.visitblairsvillega.com/webcams.php and scroll down to view the webcams.

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

had ever seen. Over the next few weeks Granny canned potatoes and made soup with potatoes. We enjoyed those potatoes all winter long.

A memory that Papa told me of his teenaged years concerned revival meeting. All the local churches began their revival meetings after lay-by time, when cotton became too big to plow but was too young to harvest. Services were held before lunch and after supper. The walls and floors were usually of planking and had no insulation. During the afternoon between services, Papa and his brothers and a cousin were walking down an old single track road when they noticed a hole in the ground which yellow jackets were entering and exiting. One of the boys found an old brown bottle and stuck the end with the hole down into the yellow jacket hole. Papa cut a stick while the other boys jumped up and down around the bottle so as to make the yellow jackets mad. I hope you'll understand that it doesn't take much to make a yel-

low jacket angry during the month of August. Pretty soon the bottle was filled with angry yellow jackets. The boys inserted the cut stick into the bottle and then took it to the Church House and hid it in the hollow of a tree.

Later that evening all the boys, save one, showed up at church and sat down on the back row. Uncle Pick went to the outhouse right before services began. When no one was looking he retrieved the bottle and crawled under the floor of the church to the knothole which was located right behind the pulpit. He waited for preaching to begin and gently removed the stick. Then the open end of the bottle was inserted into the knothole. The church house had one kerosene lamp located right above the pulpit. You can guess what happened.

Pretty soon the preacher was slapping yellow jackets. Then he began to holler and everyone in church thought the Preacher was really going to town with his sermon. The boys were trying not to laugh, and then the altar filled with 50 people that joined the church. Also, many came forward to be baptized.

The boys thought they had got away with their prank until they heard their Daddy clear his throat behind them. He then asked about their brother, Pick. All he said was, "The Lord moves in mysterious ways, and we'll talk about this at home."

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

will increase the Brix number. It is also important to harvest at the time when Brix is at its peak. After it peaks, it will start to decline.

Once the sorghum is harvested, it must be pressed to extract the juice out of it. Historically this was done with a mule-powered press, but there are electric ones available now. The juice is allowed to settle and then run through the pan. The pan is over a fire that cooks out the water in the juice. Typically, a producer will get 1 gallon of syrup for 8-10 gallons of juice. After cooking, the syrup is ready to sell.

If you are interested in growing sorghum, contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

In the beginning there was only night. Then I called you from the darkness where I hide. I can stand now 'cause your love has made me strong. You're the singer. I'm the song."

Faith, repentance, courage, and cost are part and parcel of the joyful Christian journey. Why travel in the dark, when you can see by the light of the world? www.mountain-christian.net

Ashurst...

continued from Page 4A

individual will accomplish worthwhile goals, and such achievements will give uplifting motivation as he or she seeks out additional goals and successes.

In close relationships, the involved individuals must be committed to promoting each other to become one's best if the friendship is to remain valid and intact. It is a matter of giving one another positive, regular "pats on the back" reassurances. Anything less than that will eventually annihilate the relationship, and it will become a faint memory.

It is vitally important to remember that remaining in the state of a positive "becoming" individual, a person must keep one's eyes on his or her goals, promote one's boundaries, and be proud of one's achievements.

Dyer...

continued from Page 4A

zations that work diligently to provide an element of safety, and we must take up the responsibility of providing our own safety. We must be aware, prepared, and we must report suspicious activity.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Combs...

continued from Page 4A

of being the laughingstock of other nations?

This election will determine the destiny of America, and if God is left out of the equation when folks go to vote, then we can expect great consequences to continue to plague our land because of the disobedience of God's people that might choose to stay home instead of taking a stand for what is best for the next generation. Let your heart be your guide, not your pride. Get out and vote, and let's win our nation back under a leadership that loves America and loves the nation of Israel.

Frank F. Combs

<p>The Rules of MASONIC ETIQUETTE</p>	<p>The MASONIC TRESTLEBOARD Whitey White</p> 
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Obey the Gavel

You must immediately obey the gavel. Why? Failure to immediately obey the gavel is a GRAVE DISCOURTESY and VERY poor Masonic Etiquette.

The Master is leader of the lodge and his word is final: a) He can put or refuse to put any motion, b) He can rule any brother out of order on any subject at any time, c) He can say what he will, and what he will not, permit to be discussed, and d) Brethren who think him unfair, arbitrary, unjust, or acting illegally have

redress.

The Grand Lodge can be appealed to on any such matter. However, in the lodge, the Master's gavel, which is his emblem of authority, is supreme. When a brother is rapped down, he should obey at once, without any further discussion. It is VERY bad manners to do otherwise. In fact, it is perilously close to the line between bad manners and a Masonic offense.

Masonic etiquette decries anyone who does not obey the gavel.

Blood Assurance: Local Blood and Platelet Mobile Drives Upcoming Dates

SEPTEMBER and OCTOBER 2024

09/18/24 ... Union General Hospital (11:30 AM-4:30 PM)
(Blood and Platelet Mobile)

09/21/24 ... Derrick Whittle Memorial Blood Drive
Pat Haralson Memorial Civic Cntr. (11 AM-5 PM)
(Blood and Platelet Mobile)

09/24/24 ... Walmart - Blairsville (10 AM-3 PM)
(Blood and Platelet Mobile)

10/05/24 ... Woody Gap School (9 AM-2 PM)
(Blood Mobile)

10/15/24 ... Chatuge Regional Hospital (11 AM-4 PM)
(Blood Mobile)

10/17/24 ... Union County Health Department (9 AM-2 PM)
(Blood and Platelet Mobile)

10/25/24 ... Walmart - Blairsville (10 AM-3 PM)
(Blood and Platelet Mobile)

Call to schedule an appointment:
(423) 467-3201 or (423) 756-0966