

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Outdoor Burning

October is here. That means cooler temperatures and falling leaves. People will be out burning leaves and yard debris during this fall season. Each year at this time, we talk about outdoor burning. We remind everyone what is required to legally burn yard debris and we provide some safety tips.

When burning debris, you must first obtain a burning permit from the Georgia Forestry Commission. Outdoor burning permits are for the burning of natural vegetative materials. It is unlawful to burn man-made materials such as plastics, lumber, household garbage, etc.

The burning permit is easy to obtain by calling 1-877-OK2-Burn or by going online at www.gatrees.org. Complete some basic information and a burning permit number will be issued if burning is allowed that day. There may be times where burning is not allowed and, in those cases, permits will not be issued.

Once you have a permit, it is time to prepare the debris pile. Landowners are responsible for fire safety, what they burn, the smoke, and maintaining the fire on their property. Make sure that you have enough time to commit to burning. Advise your neighbors that you will be burning to prevent smoke investigation reports. Prepare tools that may be needed to help control the fire such as shovels, rakes, and a water hose. Wear the proper clothing including long pants, long sleeves, boots, gloves, and safety goggles.

Landowners should check the weather and know the conditions for the entire day. Windy conditions can spread controlled fires quickly. Drought or dry conditions eliminate the moisture in the leaves which promotes ignition. If a burning leaf or ember from a controlled fire were to get blown into another area of dried leaves, they can catch fire and the fire would spread quickly, resulting in a wildfire.

When preparing the debris pile, make small piles and clear 25 feet or more around the pile. You should never use any flammable liquids to start the fire. Remain with the fire until all debris is burned. If small embers remain, extinguish them with the water hose before leaving the fire. Remember that all fires must be extinguished before dark.

Union County Fire Department is always ready to respond.

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



A Trustworthy Statement

Who can you trust these days? What lies behind that question is the basic human need to rely on people and information. Without trust, things fall apart.

It is a delight to have people in your life that you can trust. They are honest, dependable, and consistent. They keep confidences and act with integrity. The problem is that people can fail and every time you experience a betrayal, your trustworthy bar is raised. It's a lonely life when that bar is too high for anyone to clear. And if you're honest, sometimes you can't even trust yourself. Rash thinking, unchecked emotions, and bad habits betray your best intentions.

We would like to trust the institutions that make society work, like the legal system. But what do we make of FISA court abuses resulting in unwarranted surveillance of American citizens? Or the district attorney failing to act in the Ahmaud Arbery case, requiring the state investigators to step in? Or the IRS seizing a citizen's assets with no criminal charges filed and no verdict pronounced?

Surely we can trust science! Yet we hear rumors that scientists initiated the current pandemic by creating a COVID virus in a lab. In 2018, a scientist used CRISPR technology to edit the genes of twin girls without knowing the unintended consequences of those edits. Are scientists constrained by ethics, free from biases of their own thinking and influence by the governments and mega-companies that fund them? Can we trust scientists and their followers who treat the profession as the sole arbiter of truth? That's not science but scientism, a religion.

Despite human imperfection, you can still find examples of trustworthiness. Couples celebrate 50 years of marriage. Schoolteachers instruct children with care. Pastors stay true to their message. Business managers keep their word. Employees are honest and dedicated. You can even walk out of your own valley of disloyalty, though it can be a long and scrutinized journey back to trustworthiness.

In a world where betrayal, dishonesty, and incompetence can appear without warning, your best hope is to trust this: "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived,

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



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Commissioner's Questions

Q. When is the next Electronics Recycling and Document Destruction Event here in Union County?

A. This event is scheduled for Oct. 24 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the North Georgia Technical College. It will be in the front parking lot as it has been in the past. You will just drive up and unload your electronics to be recycled and your documents that need to be shredded, and the people there will handle the rest. They will be taking up a donation of \$5 per vehicle (or more if willing) that will be going to the Humane Society's Mountain Shelter. More information on the event, including a list of what items will be accepted, can be found on the Union County website at www.unioncountygga.gov.

Q. Will the Electronics Recycling and Document Destruction Event be cancelled if it is raining?

A. If it is raining or if there is a very high probability of rain for Oct. 24 the event will be cancelled. Unfortunately, the electronics that are being recycled cannot be exposed to moisture or they are unable to recycle them. Also, the big shredder that is used to destroy personal documents cannot shred if there is moisture in the air. The shredded material just gets clogged up and will not shred properly and the equipment can be damaged. If it is going to be cancelled, posts will be made on the Union County Facebook page and it will also be on the Union County website listed in the previous question.

Q. Why should I recycle my electronics?

A. First, it keeps recyclable materials out of landfills. If we fill up a truck with recyclable electronics, that is one truck load of materials that is not going into a landfill. Many electronic devices can be reused, or they contain a variety of materials that can be recycled. Atlanta Recycling Solutions, the company that will be at the event accepting electronics, will securely destroy any sensitive information that may be contained on electronic devices. They will adhere to a zero-landfill policy. Most people don't realize it, but all electronic devices contain aluminum. Aluminum is a non-renewable resource, which means that once all the aluminum on earth is used there is no more. So, it helps to be able to get the aluminum out of these electronic devices.

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



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Letters to the Editor

Recyclables

Dear Editor,
At the recycle station near the horse arena, all recyclables except glass are thrown in together. It doesn't seem likely someone is going to go through tons of mixed cardboard, paper and plastic, separate it and recycle it. So I emailed the company that has a contract with our county to handle garbage, including recyclables, and asked for assurance that the items we bring are actually recycled. I emailed twice and never received a reply.

Then I read an investigation by National Public Radio confirming only 10% of plastics people bring to be recycled are actually recycled. The 9/25/20 issue of "The Week" magazine adds: "Internal plastic-industry documents reveal that industry leaders promoted recycling to assuage public concerns about plastic refuse, even though they knew that recycling plastic was too expensive and impractical to be adopted on a broad scale." The industry knew the public had concerns about all the plastic we threw away so they lied and told us they could recycle and make new items. They wanted us to continue to buy plastic containers, etc.

Disgraceful, of course, and here we are separating paper, cardboard, plastics and glass, and I don't believe for a minute it is all getting recycled. Is there someone out there who could prove me wrong?

Betty MacCloud

Re: "Tooth Fairy Voters"

Dear Editor,
Boy! Talk about exaggerated and extreme thinking, not to mention fearmongering! Socialism? Islamized America? American lives at risk? Oh wait... that one already happened due to the president's lies and incompetence! Well, how about a healthy dose of fascism? Because that is where this country is headed if we stay the course. Is that the America we want? That might be okay for some... those with "Good Genes," as our eloquent president stated in his recent speech to his 80% white audience. But for me and those who look like me, fascism does not look appealing. Just to be clear, Hitler was a fascist and we,

See *Chavis*, page 5A

Totally Without Honor

Dear Editor,
In response to the recent letter with the "history lesson" regarding Thomas Jefferson, the writer's hero was certainly a populist who claimed to love the common people, but he was also a rabble-rousing, anti-Christian demagogue who promoted violent revolution and the murder of his political and religious opponents. He did not care if the entire human race, except for "an Adam and an Eve," died in pursuit of his objectives.

"The tree of liberty ... refreshed ... by blood" was what Jefferson's secret letters promoted in theory, and what he frequently supported to perfect America: Shay's Rebellion in Massachusetts, the Whiskey Rebellion in Pennsylvania, threats of violence by Virginia in order to obtain his own election by the House of Representatives

See *Clair*, page 5A

Uplifting NGN Edition!

Dear Editor,
Last week's newspaper was chock-full of Good News, especially welcome in these days of overwhelming doom/gloom, rioting, political bickering and lack of reason for smiles.

The uplifting story of career firefighter and EMT Robby Brown, and how Derrick Whittle's family has been commemorating their son's impact as a sheriff's deputy with a blood drive for the past eight years. The Byron Herbert Reece Society celebrating our poet-laureate's 103rd "birthday." And, of course, the wonderful recognition of Sarah Howard by the National Future Farmers of America — the first female from Union County to receive that honor!

All the articles were beautiful reminders of why those of us who weren't born in Union

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Letters to the Editor

In Response to "Sports & Politics"

Dear Editor,
Blacks kill Blacks. Blacks kill Whites. Whites kill Whites. Whites kill Blacks. That's reality. Killers are people who break the law. Most are criminals and should be punished. Killers and criminals, however, did NOT take an oath to "serve and protect." Police officers DID! Their oath is as follows:
"On my honor, I will never betray my integrity, my character or the public trust. I will always have the courage to hold myself and others accountable for our actions. I will always maintain the highest ethical standards and uphold the values of my community, and the agency I serve."

Unfortunately, many of them do not live up to this oath. Many of them hide their hatred of people of color behind their badges. Statistics are not what's important here. What's important is

See *Barrett*, page 5A

Open Letter to America

Dear Editor,
On Sept. 24, a group of top national security leaders published an Open Letter to America endorsing Joe Biden for President of the United States. Addressed to "Our Fellow Citizens," it was signed by 489 retired Generals, Admirals, Senior Noncommissioned Officers, Ambassadors, and Senior Civilian National Security Officials. They wrote, "We are Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. We love our country. Unfortunately, we also fear for it."

Their letter also states, "While some of us may have different opinions on particular

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Futile Attempt at Control

Dear Editor,
I have recently advocated for a person with elevated heart rate. They were taken to the hospital ICU where their heart rate reached 155 beats per minute before it was controlled. The resultant damage to the heart left its efficiency, or ejection fraction, at 25%. An ejection fraction of 25% raises a person's chances of heart failure significantly. Additional procedures (cath lab) were scheduled to see what damage was done and what corrections could be made. But before this took place, the person was found to be positive for the current virus and the cath lab procedure was canceled, due, apparently, to a COVID-19 mandate that it was an elective procedure. This person had no exposure prior to leaving home for the preceding three weeks and had no symptoms (cold, flu, etc.). So, did this person contract

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Up North and Cold

When I was 2 years old, my Daddy lost his job. To find work, we moved north to Chicago and lived there about four-five years. I remember very few things about Chicago. I remember seeing a lot of snow. I remember not being able to eat grits. I remember watching the Cubs play a baseball game, and I remember the cold.

One night it turned cold and a "Blue Norther" came through. Dad got up the next morning and opened the door to our apartment and saw nothing but snow. He had to call a neighbor to dig us out simply to walk out the front door. Another time it was snowing and Dad woke me up. I was told to get out of bed and get dressed. I remember an orange glow coming through the window. Apparently, the building next door was on fire!

We walked out of the house and began walking downstairs. Mom was leading me and Dad was carrying my baby sister. His foot slipped on the ice of the stairway and down he went. He turned at least two flips as he tumbled down the steps. At the bottom of the landing Dad stood up and checked my sister. She slept straight through the whole thing!

While we lived there we were always cold, even in the summertime. My Mom and another lady took a bunch of us kids to Lake Michigan to go swimming in July. Mom said that my sister and I were the only two kids that wouldn't get into the water. We told Mom that "the water hurts." When we did try to swim we turned blue! We stayed on the beach and played in the sand. I went back up there a couple of years ago, and it's just like I remember: cold! If you think Helton Creek is cold, visit Lake Michigan. Even in late summer the temperatures are in the low 50s.

But, it does get cold here from time to time. I was talking to a friend the other day, and he remembered a story from his early years about cars and cold weather. Apparently, a young man had just acquired a new car — his first one. The boy drove it all summer and was just getting used to his vehicle when the seasons changed. Cold weather came to Union County. Back in those early days of the automobile, the use of antifreeze was unheard of, and folks just used water to keep their vehicles from overheating. But, in the winter, the vehicles had to be drained of water or protected to keep them from freezing.

So, one night this boy's radiator froze up. The next day he was complaining about it to his friends. When asked about what he was putting in his radiator, the boy said, "Well, I use spring water." When asked why he used spring water, the boy replied, "Well, I have never seen

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Chamber of Commerce

Fall entered with brisk mornings ushering in the slow parade of color. But leaf color is not the only changes we are seeing. Our Union County economy continues its upward trajectory with an unemployment rate that has dropped to 4.9%. Businesses are particularly pleased seeing this as a sign our economy is getting back on track. If you are still seeking employment, check out the "Drive-Thru" Job Fair on Oct. 9 in the parking lot of the formerly FATZ restaurant, where you will find Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, Brasstown Valley Resort & Spa, Chick-fil-A, Corrugated Replacements, Ingles of Blairsville, Panel Built, Popeyes and Union General Health Systems looking forward to meeting future employees. Contact the Union County Development Authority, Downtown Development Authority, or the Chamber office for more information on this distanced, drive-thru, apply-on-the-spot opportunity to secure employment.

The Downtown Development Authority

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Chrysanthemums

Chrysanthemums, also called mums, are the Queen of Fall Flowers. They can have gorgeous flowers each fall and bring a lot of color to the home this time of the year. There are several nurseries around here that grow beautiful mums. Let's talk about some of the properties of this plant and what you could do to have mums in your yard.

Mums are a member of the daisy family (Asteraceae). This is one of the biggest families in the plant kingdom with a wide variety of flowering plants. The mums was first cultivated in the 15th century B.C. in China. In the 8th century A.D. the mum made its way to Japan. They were so popular there that the mum became the official seal of the emperor. The mum was introduced to the Western world in 1753 by Carl Linnaeus, a Swedish botanist. Growers from ancient China would probably not recognize modern day mums due to the breeding that has given them more showy flowers. Chrysanthemum is also the source for an insecticide called pyrethrum. Because this insecticide is developed from a natural source it is considered an organic insecticide.

The easiest way to have blooming mums at your house each year will be to buy them in the fall from a local nursery. However, if you are interested in growing your own mums it is possible. There are many different varieties available, so talking with a local nursery will help you choose a variety that is acclimated to our area. They do best when planted in the spring after the last frost. Planting in the spring will give them time to develop a root system so that the following winter they will be able to survive. Well drained soils with full sun are the best for growth. Mums need a slightly acidic soil with a pH near 6.5.

After planting fertilize mums with 5-10-5 fertilizer. The high phosphorus will assist root growth on mums. As the mum is growing in the summer pinching the tips of the mum will increase the amount of branching on the plant. More branching will lead to a fuller plant. Pinch the top half inch to full inch of the plant to encourage branching. Pinch every four to six weeks until August when the flower buds begin to appear.

Mums are relatively easy to take care of, but there are a couple of diseases to look out for. Some of the most common diseases are powdery mildew, blight, leaf spot, and rust. These diseases are fairly easy to control either by fungicide applications or removing the infected leaves. Spider mites and aphids can be pests of mums. They can be controlled by insecticides but good cov-

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Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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