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applied almost immediately. Within two to three weeks, you should never know anything was done.

Please remember that we do this for your safety, not because we want to make everyone mad that we are digging up their recently mowed grass. If within two weeks there are still problems, please call the Road Department at (706) 439-6062 and they will address any issues. Thanks for your patience.

**Q. When will the new Kayak Launch off the Blue Ridge Highway open?**

A. We had a ribbon cutting last week and it is now open to the public. Sadly, we have already had people going out there after dark partying and yelling resulting in the deputies having been called out twice. So, we are now having to make gates to block off the area except during regular summer time hours.

**Q. I am planning my wedding for this fall. Are there any county facilities that would accommodate this**

**type of event?**

A. There are a few different facilities that can accommodate a wedding. The Community Center has the large banquet room upstairs with a fire place and breathtaking views of the mountains. It will accommodate up to 150 people. You can call and speak to Renai, the Event Coordinator, at (706) 439-6076. The Byron Herbert Reece Farm and Heritage Center is a beautiful location for an outdoor wedding. There is the large pavilion with the outdoor fireplace and a peaceful creek running right through the property. You can call (706) 745-2034 for more information. There is also the Choestoe Historic School House which is ideal for smaller weddings. This facility will seat about 60 people located in a beautiful area of the county with wonderful scenery. There are other private areas in the county that make great wedding venues and you can visit the Chamber of Commerce Website at [www.blairsvillechamber.com](http://www.blairsvillechamber.com) for more information.

**Cummings... continued from Page 4A**

old men would sit on the front porch during the spring, summer and fall. During the winter the pair would sit by Clifford's old pot-bellied stove. Most of the time Clifford would win the game and that was good because Clifford could not stand to lose. But, when Doc won the game Clifford would pout and say, "You must have cheated. Everyone knows you can't beat me at Dominoes. Get out of my house and don't come back". Then the old man would snatch the dominoes off the table and throw them in the fire. By all accounts you would think the relationship between Doc and Clifford was over. However, early on the next Tuesday morning you could find Clifford walking the quarter mile to the Nix Mercantile to buy a new set of dominoes.

Let me remind each of you that Trash to Treasures is held each Thursday and Friday from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. Also, let me remind each of you about the Growing Giant Pumpkins Seminar at the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center on April 23rd at 6 p.m. Our speakers will include Dr. Tim Coolong and Dr. George Boyhan. These two men will tell you how to grow giant pumpkins. I am talking about 500-1400 pound monsters. Hopefully, you will be able to enter those pumpkins in our Great Butternut Creek Pumpkin Contest this fall. For more information regarding the seminar on pumpkins you can visit our website at [UCFarmersMarket.com](http://UCFarmersMarket.com) or email us at [farmersmarket@uniongov.com](mailto:farmersmarket@uniongov.com).

**Riley ... continued from Page 4A**

the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker and many other fire-dependent species. Prescribed burning is the only known forest management method which perpetuates the longleaf/wiregrass ecosystem, Georgia's most diverse flora and fauna ecosystem.

Frequent fires, set by lightning strikes and Native Americans, have shaped Georgia's ecosystems for thousands of years. Our forest ecosystems evolved with fire and continue to need the strategic application of fire that mimics this natural cycle. The plants and animals of the pine woods are accustomed to frequent fires and depend on these fires for their survival.

Fire is as natural as sunshine, rain and wind in many plant communities including upland pine, pine flatwoods, marshes and wet prairies. Fire also benefits many of the rare animal species in our state that are declining. Some of these declines are caused almost totally by fire exclusion. Smoke from prescribed fires is a sign that certain lands are being cared for properly. Great care is taken

by prescribed fire managers to minimize any temporary inconveniences created by smoke. Smoke management plans for prescribed burns are designed so that smoke-sensitive areas like roads and residences, etc. are not negatively affected by the burn. Smoke from prescribed fires does not contribute appreciably to air quality issues since the practice typically avoids times of stagnant summer air. However, uncontrolled wildfires usually occur during the summer when there is already a bad urban air quality problem. We can reduce the risk of wildfires and the resulting smoke or air quality problems with well-timed prescribed fires. No other tool can so effectively remove the hazardous buildup of woodland fuels.

For more information about Prescribed Fire, visit [www.garxfire.com](http://www.garxfire.com) or the Georgia Forestry Commission, at [www.GaTrees.org](http://www.GaTrees.org). Frank Riley is Executive Director of the Chestatee/Chattahoocsee RC&D Council. For more information on RC&D programs email [www.frank.ccred@gmail.com](mailto:www.frank.ccred@gmail.com).

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When people of sound mind and courage begin to stand up and demand an end to the nonsensical divisions being foisted on us to create havoc, then we will all have freedom of speech and freedom of religion. No one is going to go hungry by being refused food at any restaurant or donuts at any bakery; and no one is going to go without a wedding cake or a photographer—they just have to call another baker or photographer! And if a pharmacy will not carry the morning-after pill because of religious conviction, there are surely dozens of other pharmacists willing to do so.

Our country was founded on freedom of speech and religious freedom. But to expect people to give up their religious rights regarding participation in certain situations that go against their beliefs, without the possibility of being heard in court, is unconscionable.


The Constitution grants Equal Rights, and the freedom to excuse oneself from certain activities is part of that. Most people subscribe to a live-and-let-live attitude, allowing others to make their own decisions. But now, Equal Rights are superseded by those who have "special rights" because they claim they are offended by someone who refuses to believe as they do. Give all people the right to our convictions and be allowed to participate or refuse to participate in situations in which we feel uncomfortable.

I had a quilting business that took me all around the country. If a customer had asked me to do a quilted piece featuring swastikas, I would have politely refused. Would I have lost my business because of that? Maybe. The bakers lost theirs. What would you be willing to lose if your convictions were confronted?

Several people have asked where my book (An Ordinary Life—Touched by an Extraordinary God) that was removed because of its religious title, can now be found. Look for it at Bi-Lo and Ingles and the Barn Gift Shop at Brothers at Willow Ranch. Those who choose not to buy it have that right; but those who agree to sell it and those who choose to buy it should also have equal rights.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Arlene M. Gray**

**Bell Ringing Union  
County Old Courthouse**



**Bell ringing information  
at 706-745-5493**

**Leone... continued from Page 4A**

"white gold" or "edible ivory" asparagus is also referred to as "the royal vegetable" throughout Europe. It is less bitter and much more tender. The there's purple asparagus, which was originally developed in Italy. It differs from its green and white counterparts, having higher sugar and lower fiber levels. The price tag is a wee bit more extravagant, as well.

You probably have heard that asparagus is an exceptional natural diuretic, but did you know that asparagus is comprised of 93 percent water? This water volume has nothing to do with the thickness, though. Stem thickness indicates the age of the plant, with the thicker stems coming from older plants. Older, thicker stalks can be woody, although peeling the skin at the base removes the tough layer. Peeled asparagus will however poach much faster.

Here's my favorite way to prepare this vegetable. Pre-heat your oven to 400 degrees. Take

a large cookie sheet and smear with extra virgin olive oil. Place the rinsed, and still wet stalks on the oiled cookie sheet in a single layer. Toss them around in the oil and season with garlic powder and black pepper. Do not salt before cooking. Now place the cookie sheet in your oven for about 18 mins. No need to do anything else while they are roasting. When they come out, toss them with some sea salt and a little more olive oil. Serve at room temperature or warm. Leftovers make a great filling for scrambled eggs the next morning.

Those I've met who despise the vegetable were forced to eat the canned version as a child, usually served cold as an appetizer or salad garnishment. Truly, if you are one of those who has never given fresh asparagus a chance to prove itself to you as an adult, please reconsider this abstinence this spring.

I hope you'll give another spring vegetable that grows wild in these mountains a try Saturday, May 9th, at the Union County Farmers Market where we will be celebrating Ramp Day. More on that at our website, [www.UCFarmersMarket.com](http://www.UCFarmersMarket.com).

**Calise ... continued from Page 4A**

ney. More importantly, they brought out Tricia's smile, even on the roughest of days.

Many of you offered your time to be next to her, to care for her needs around the clock. Those unselfish offers were heard with much appreciation, but due to her compromised immune system it was best that we kept her caregivers to a few. They gave tirelessly and with such warmth and patience. For this, we will be forever grateful.

The medical care, from the time we first arrived in the emergency room of Union General Hospital, through the weeks at Erlanger and then the assistance we received back home in Union County, all was given with a gentle tenderness that made the most disheartening news somehow possible to hear and accept.

Tricia has always had many friends, some she's had for nearly as many years as she had on this earth, and they were by her side through it all. Many more of you have been her friends just since she came to this community 17 years ago. You may have worked with her in her volunteer work for numerous causes, worked by her side to make her plans a reality for the benefit of the animals helped by the Mountain Shelter or just shared good times with her over a glass of wine, a hike in the woods, a spin at the gym, a fishing rod in hand or great conversations with plenty of java on hand.

We knew she was very present in this community, but what we could never have imagined is the outpouring of love and support that she was showered with throughout this difficult time. All of you pulling together your resources to raise the monies that made it possible for her to fight without the concerns of financial responsibilities were an amazing gift - one that we all accepted with humbleness.

Tricia would be the first one to tell you that she was not a saint. She, like all of us, struggled with the challenges of everyday life. What made Tricia so special was how she handled those challenges. She wore her heart on her sleeve and a smile that resonated directly from her heart. She pulled for the underdog (and cats). She stood by everyone's side to lift them to their highest potential. She laughed easily, shed tears of joy and sorrow without hesitation and she hugged with no inhibition. Please let this be her legacy, one that each of us will work to emulate.

Tricia has left us too soon, leaving a gaping hole in our hearts. We are told that time will heal the pain. In the meantime it is important to us that you all know how appreciative we are for all that you have done to make our loss at all bearable.

**Darlene Calise and family**

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they actually do. Paul offers another nugget. "Because of (conscience's sake) you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God" (Rom 13:6). I tell you what let's do. Let's just pay our taxes and believe that God has a divine purpose for those that rule over us. We don't have to trust them, but we can trust Him.

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and offers, visit our website at [www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com](http://www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com) or call us at (706) 745-5789.