

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Extension Leadership System (ELS) encourages agriculture

The Extension Leadership System (ELS) is a local committee sponsored by the Cooperative Extension service and is made up of representatives from the local area representing Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer sciences, and 4H plus members of the local community that are interested in promoting and encouraging agriculture in the local area. The local ELS committees sponsor farmers market, community gardens among other activities that promote agriculture and gardening in the local area.

Executive Director of RC&D

Frank Riley



The Cooperative Extension Service is a partnership in outreach education funded by federal, state, and local governments. The program is carried out in Georgia by county extension agents from the University of Georgia and Fort Valley State University. They rely on research-based information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Georgia Agricultural Experiment Stations, and faculty from the two universities.

The Cooperative Extension Service began as a mechanism to teach farmers and their families how to improve their quality of life. Today it delivers education throughout the state in agricultural and environmental sciences, family and consumer sciences, 4-H and youth development, and related areas.

In 1914 Georgians began to look for guidance to a new federal-state partnership called the University of Georgia's Cooperative Extension Service. The congressional legislation that enabled this kind of cooperation nationwide, the Smith-Lever Act, created a means to deliver useful and practical agricultural and home economics information to all Americans. The act was coauthored by Georgia's U.S. senator and former governor Hoke Smith. The Georgia Cooperative Extension Service soon evolved into one of the three major thrusts of the UGA College of Agriculture, alongside residential instruction (college teaching) and research (Experiment Stations). The early years emphasized agricultural production with service-oriented programs for individual farmers, homemakers, and children. Early extension workers made personal visits to

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Dangerous Faith

We just passed the anniversary of the 9/11 terrorism that took American lives in New York, Washington DC, and Pennsylvania in 2001. The same religious belief that inspired those events is still wreaking havoc in Syria and Iraq, forcing thousands of refugees to flee the murder and mayhem. As evil as this is, some people incredibly compare Christianity as dangerous too.

Markos Moulitsas, founder of DailyKos.com wrote a book in which he made the case that Christians are the "American Taliban." He makes a sweeping moral equivalence between the terroristic tactics of radical Islamists, and Christians embracing the morals Jesus taught and inviting people to believe Him.

Shepard Smith of Fox News apparently bought into this 'haters' theme more than once on-air. He chastised and mocked Christians as hypocritical for promoting traditional morality while rejecting Sharia Law as not applicable under the U.S. Constitution. That makes us dangerous and intolerant.

Laura Miller, founder of Salon.com, and columnist for "The New York Times Book Review" was appalled to realize that C.S. Lewis' *Narnia* books are Christian allegory. She apparently concluded that the Christian themes that permeate the books are subversive. Perhaps she can't reconcile her love of the story as a child with her rejection of Christ as an adult, but does that make the beloved *Narnia* author dangerous?

Richard Dawkins is a secular atheist author. He rejects a god who is "a petty, unjust, unforgiving control freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal... capriciously malevolent bully" (The God Delusion). I'm happy to confirm that the Christian faith knows of no such boogie man. Mr. Dawkins' writing projects and speaking tours take on the fervor of an evangelist trying to deliver his audience from what he sees as the dangerous trap of faith.

Is Christianity dangerous because it teaches self-sacrifice? What kind of world would it be if the greatest value was self-preservation or survival of the fittest? Is it dangerous because we recognize that our innate sense of morality must come from a law-

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Questions and Answers

Q. When is the next Electronics Recycling Event?

A. The next Electronics Recycling Event is scheduled for October 3rd from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the North Georgia Technical College here in Blairsville. If you would like a complete list of the items they will be accepting it is available in my office. Document Destruction will also be there if you want to take any of your personal papers and information to be shredded. This is a great service to our community and is set up by the North Georgia Resource Management Authority.

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Q. If we want to change a county road name what is required?

A. We do not take changing road names lightly. Many roads are named after someone and in most cases, even if no one still lives on that road, it is not likely to change. However, if it is some name that has no history or no meaning and completely different people now live on the road and all want a change, it can be considered. There will be a charge for changing road names, and signs, as this process requires a significant amount of work by staff.

Q. When is the Convenience Center located near Hwy 325 and Hwy 515 at the Horse Arena, going to be open?

A. Our office receives numerous calls each week about this. Right now the perimeter fence has been completed and the gates are installed. We are waiting for installation of the phone and internet lines. Once all this is done, the compactor will then be delivered back to the location. We still do not have a set date, but we hope by the end of October.

Q. How will the public be assured that this will not be an eyesore and become a place where people leave their couches and other ugly objects?

A. First, the site will be only open when it is manned by an employee of Advanced Disposal. Second, we are installing security cameras that will be able to pick up video of anyone leaving trash or other debris outside the fence. This will all be strictly enforced, and a \$1,000 fine should be a good deterrent.

Q What recycle items will be accepted here?

A. That is still under consideration and we will let you

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Letters to the Editor ...

Hats Off To Teachers

Dear Editor,
Hats off to the teachers of Union County that gave their time to be at Open House. Thumbs down for all the parents that didn't show up. Don't you want to know what your child is doing in school and how you can help? How is your child to know you care if you don't go to school events?

A concerned parent,
Victoria Steele

Thank You

Dear Editor,
I'm a Georgia native from a family that has lived in Georgia since 1807 and I hope everyone has noticed in the past couple of years that our summer skies have become much bluer. They're almost as blue as they were 70 years ago when I was a child. We can thank our environmental laws administered by the EPA and also many environmental groups like the Sierra Club with their "Beyond Coal Campaign" for this wonderful change. However, we can't afford to sit back now and do nothing because many of the powers in Washington want to change this by eliminating the EPA and modifying the law under the premise that it hinders business. This is being promoted mostly by groups on the right that are advocating these changes and requiring their employees in Congress including our Georgia Senators and most of our Representatives to do their bidding.

Keep this in mind in the next election and make sure these people are not returned to Washington because they don't represent us!

Lue Elder

Common Sense

Dear Editor,
We own a gun. We respect the gun. We respect and love this neighborhood. We love people. What we don't love is people's lack of common sense.

Neighborhood, families, children, a man shoots his gun continuously from his porch like a machine gun at a target. That's his yard and his right. There is no law to say otherwise. Oops! I shot your child. I couldn't help it, my bullet ricocheted. I'm sorry. This family lost a life but it's ok. He is within his rights. He was in his own yard. We have shooting ranges but I don't want to leave my house. It's ok, you can accidentally shoot another innocence.

God gave and gives common sense and wisdom to everyone. Please start using it. We love you too and we would hate to see you suffer from your negligence. Wouldn't it be easier to stop a regret than to live a regret?

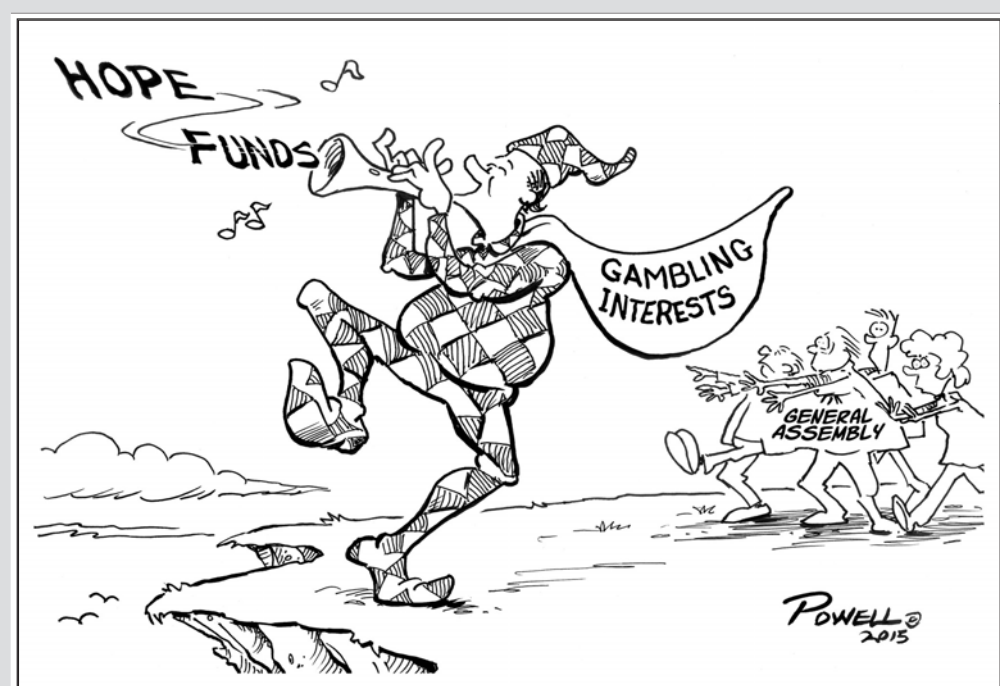
Concerned neighbors,
Howard & Jackie Wells

No Transparency at BRMEMC

Dear Editor,
We attended the September 12 meeting of BRMEMC. I was the second person to speak at the microphone. I listened to other members speak, and came away with this impression. Both the Board and the Attorney often failed to answer various questions posed by the members. For example: One member asked the total cost of the elaborate headquarters, its fence and structures surrounding the building. The attorney said he did not have the documentation to answer this question. The truth is that it costs somewhere between \$27 million and \$30 million dollars - most of which is part of the long term debt.

Another member question asked what the amount of the severance was paid to General Manager Matthew Aikens, who resigned under clouded circumstances. Again, the Board refused to answer this question. Two trusted sources told me it was \$57,000. A six month severance which

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Still Need Answers

Dear Editor,
My husband and I attended the EMC meeting Saturday, September twelfth. When the time came for the members to ask questions, I thought the questions were excellent. Unfortunately, the answers we received from Mr. Larry Sorgen were quite evasive. Actually, I thought he would make a great politician.

It seems that we don't have a right to know how much the severance package for our resigning manager was as it is "personal information". I thought asking how much his house cost would be considered personal information, not something that our co-op proposed and voted in favor.

When asked who proposed giving the resigning manager a severance package or whatever the EMC wants to call it, we were told we were not entitled to this information. If we don't know how our board votes on issues how can we intelligently vote? I happen to know it was Mr. Jenkins who proposed the severance package. I know it was not a unanimous vote so I would like to know those who supported this. We voted for

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Two Minutes

Dear Editor,
I would so like to see a campaign debate where the journalist says "Give us your position on ..." and then goes down the line giving each candidate two minutes to give their viewpoint. I am fed up with "So and so said this about you; how would you like to respond?" which does nothing but create a juvenile food-fight atmosphere. At the end of the most recent debate, I knew less about positions on issues and more about who can deliver the best barbs.

Carol McKechnie

Tis the Season

Dear Editor,
Tis the Season! Tis the season for "gifts" from the Gold Dome! Counties have sent in their lists, the "officials" have checked to see which Senators or Representatives have been naughty and which have been nice, (and which ones might need a little help in the upcoming primary) and the sleighs have been loaded with dollars for this road and loans for that project and promises to do other good works. Over the coming months we will be seeing the bags loaded with goodies being handed out by those we elected to represent us.

Actually, it's more like Trick or Treat on the heels of the largest tax increase in the history of the State of Georgia. When the gravy train comes to town, we taxpayers would do well to remember that it is our money which they are graciously returning to us, less a little processing and handling fee. We might also want to ask ourselves how much more we could do if we were permitted to keep our taxes in our own communities. Maybe we could decide which projects were

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The Game

I was fresh out of college and working in Dade County, GA. Back in those days I purchased season tickets to the UGA Games. This particular year Georgia was playing Alabama on Labor Day and I had four tickets. So, Lauren and I took Mom and Dad to Athens, GA to watch the biggest game of the year. Before we get much further there are a few things you should know about my mother. First, she doesn't enjoy football the way I do. Second, she is quiet and shy. And third, she doesn't drink.

Now, let's get on with the story. We are in Athens on a hot September afternoon. We parked the car near the coliseum on the south end of campus. We followed D. W. Brooks Drive up Ag Hill past the Plant Science Building and Connor Hall. We made our way across the Bridge and into the UGA Bookstore. We lounged in the cool air of the building before purchasing a few UGA t-shirts. Finally, we fell in line to get into the stadium.

As we made our way through the gate my mother was pulled aside to be searched. Lauren and I were immediately in front of mother and we were carrying a big bag of snacks. We went right on through the gate with no problem. Mother was carrying a small pocket book. The security guard explained he needed to look for alcohol. Dad stated, "Sir, I am a Baptist minister and am a tee-totaler". The guard replied, "Sir, I have heard that before". The guard found no alcohol in my mother's pocket book and we proceeded to our seats.

We were sitting in the upper deck of the southeast corner of the stadium. I think we had to climb about 200 steps up and then about 90 back down to our seats which were at the rail overlooking the end zone. There were 2 seats between my parents and our seats. Right before the game began two male students came and sat down between us. One of the students looked at my mother and said, "Boy, those steps are a tough climb and this weather is hot. I need something to drink". My mother replied something about being a little thirsty herself. So, the student unscrewed the eye piece of his binoculars offered it to Mom and asked, "You want a drink?" Mother politely declined and told the young man she was the wife of a minister and did not drink.

The game was basically a defensive struggle and UGA was slightly behind for most of the game. However, the two students were enjoying themselves thanks to their hollow binoculars. At the beginning of the third quarter the students were approached by a security guard and asked if they were throwing things from their seats. "No sir. If you don't believe us just ask our Pastor" the students replied while pointing at my father. My father told the guard that the two boys were not throwing things over

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Discover Scotland

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is happy to announce our next great travel opportunity to Scotland in September 2016. Discover Scotland is being offered by the Chamber in partnership with leading tour operator Collette Vacations.

The Discover Scotland tour departs September 26, 2016 for a ten day getaway. Enjoy stunning landscapes, lively cities, stirring history plus distinct myths and stories. The tour begins in Edinburgh where you'll see the Edinburgh Castle, home of the Scottish Crown Jewels, and the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the Queen's official residence and former home of Mary, Queen of Scots. You'll visit St. Andrews, the beautiful town that gave the world the game of golf, to see the Royal and Ancient Clubhouse and the famous Old Course. Additional stops include Scotland's renowned whisky distilleries, and the Culloren Battlefield and Dunrobin Castle in Inverness. Spend a day of adventure on Orkney Islands and experience Skara Brae, a Neolithic village built at the same time as the Great Pyramid in Egypt, and pass the prehistoric Ring of Brodgar, reported to be older than Stonehenge. Relax as you take in the panorama of Loch Ness, enjoy a stunning ride to the legendary Isle of Skye and embark on a relaxing cruise on the famed Loch Lomond, the largest lake in the United Kingdom. You'll even get a taste of the country life when you visit a working Scottish farm in Glencoe. A

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It's All About the Stem

Last year, a Swiss gardener from Pfungen by the name of Beni Meier, age 30, transported his pumpkin 383 kilometers to Mainz Germany to enter it in a giant pumpkin contest. It weighed nearly as much as a small Fiat. With this entry, he managed to strip a California couple of the world record.

I saw pictures of the gigantic winning gourd. I suppose it would look fine on the steps of the Taj Mahal. It was much too big for my cottage estate. It was significantly misshapen, burdened with an overabundance of pulp. Some large squash maintain their shape, and become enormous, yet still sculptured, like the pumpkin that takes Cinderella to the ball. Others just become pleasantly plump, where the diameter of the fruit gets that middle age spread that happens to so many of us women at menopause. Though more difficult to carve this shape, they will always be the most room for that craggy tooth smile that is so enduring.

Meir's ton plus award winning pumpkin certainly was not blue ribboned for its looks. The bottom rested to the far west of the stem, which rose disproportionately off the ground from the center of the melted globe. It actually looked like it had morphed into a petrified blob.

When I visit a pumpkin patch I first look at the stems. I want a pumpkin that sits with its stem centered, thick and sturdy enough that I can carry the pumpkin by this nub to its place of autumn honor. The stem should be cut right below the crook of the curl, so that it has the development of a hook. After I'm drawn to the stem, then I look at the shape and color of flesh below it. Green, yellow, cream or orange, tall, thin, squatly; the right combination with the balance of the stem will find me unlocking my wallet.

There's an international organization, the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth or better known at the GPC, who has weigh-ins around the globe of these monstrous garden freaks. These competitions pit breeders like Beni Meier against mutinous farmers from across the seas without having to transport the flabby orange flesh halfway around the globe.

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