

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Finding Your Way

I was in Suches last week with the Girl Scouts at the Mountain Fellowship Camp. Some of you may know the camp through its history as the Eckerd Youth Camp. The stunning transformation of this lovely piece of God's country is no less than amazing. Of course, one of the things that we always do when we are at camp is take a hike. Each year is a different theme – this year we let the girls pick, but only after they started the hike and began to see what interested them. The Brownies (second and third-graders) were beginning to see new signs of life everywhere, and as we progressed down what we thought was a well-blazed path, we found ourselves off course and had to backtrack, relying on familiar sights and sounds to guide our way. The older girls took a little more rigorous hike up into the woods and were amazed to find hundreds of pairs of sneakers and hiking shoes dangling from the trees at the terminus of the course. Some of the girls did not know the meaning of the shoes in the trees; we explained it was a way of celebrating a journey in which we were indeed not lost, and ultimately found our way to success.

So, I got to thinking about how the girls, and all of us, can use those lessons, especially as we approach Memorial Day. Our nation has lost so many soldiers in world and localized conflicts. And as so many profess, if we do not look to our past, our progress, we are doomed to make a wrong turn in the future. A wrong turn in the woods, doomed to be lost, perhaps ill-prepared for what the immediate future holds. However, relying on good skills, learning from the past, honing decision making, will certainly put us on a path that will minimize the risk of being in an uncertain place in a certainly uncertain world, providing a reason to "throw our shoes in the trees" to celebrate our successes as individuals and as a nation. We honor those who have gone before us, and in so doing, we must look back on their course, take what is good and use it, cast off what was not, and always move forward toward success. That men and women who lost their lives to help guide us on a better path is not to be taken lightly.

So, until we meet and muse again, I bid you "At Ease!" PS Please plan to bring your own chair or blanket and join your community at this year's Memorial Day Program at the Veteran's Park in Blairsville. The event is scheduled for Saturday, May 29, at 10 a.m. This is a fair-weather event only, with no alternate venue or rain date.

Military Musings

Janice Walters-Taylor



Praying for Liberty

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17).

The theme for this year's National Day of Prayer was, "Lord, pour out your love, life, and liberty." What an encouraging and timely prayer!

President Harry Truman inaugurated the National Day of Prayer in 1952. That same year, Paul Harvey wrote a book for Americans. He warned that fear is a tool to control people. He wrote, "man + fear – God = man over man." Almost 70 years later, politicians, media, and activists still mix fear and godlessness to accrue power. You may be aware of what's happening but rather than responding in fear, trust the presence of the Lord to give you freedom from fear. That is a liberty no one can take away.

The zeitgeist (cultural mood) of today entraps the soul. Professor Carl Trueman writes that it "prioritizes victimhood, sees selfhood in psychological terms, regards traditional sexual codes as oppressive, and places a premium on the individual's right to define his or her own existence." Such a mood coerces people to create an identity, morality, and meaning "ex nihilo" (out of nothing). They're trying to build a smart phone with sand and a screwdriver. The good news is that God created with order and meaning, so when you discover His design and purpose for your life, you are liberated.

Another drain on freedom is unrestrained government. Levying usurious taxes, spending borrowed money, imposing overburdening regulations, removing incentive to work, and funding the extermination of unborn humans are forms of tyranny. The totalitarian impulse brands as a bigot anyone who speaks out to protect the innocent and preserve freedom. As government grows in power, we're reminded of Lord Acton's famous maxim, "absolute power corrupts absolutely." The good news is that we know One who is more powerful and can displace tyranny and totalitarianism with liberty.

By far your greatest need for liberty is not from fear, culture, or government. You can suffer in a prison of sin without seeing the bars, but you can be set free! This is why the gos-

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Now that we are seeing local COVID-19 cases decreasing in a consistent manner, I wanted to give a quick update on the general status of the Union County Government. We are very appreciative to everyone who made a positive contribution to the mitigation effort – contributions that got us through what we hope is the worst of the situation.

Q. Is the Union County Health Department still using the Sports Center to give COVID-19 vaccines?

A. No, as demand for the vaccines decreased, the Union County Health Department was able to move back to their facility next door. They continue to schedule vaccines, and they continue to take walk-ins at their facility. We are so proud of the great work they have done.

Q. Were Union County Government operations ever impacted by the effects of the pandemic?

A. No and Yes. Most of the services provided by the Union County Government continued uninterrupted; however, a few were directly impacted because they put people in situations where they could potentially be exposed to COVID-19 or because the volunteers required to conduct the business were not willing to chance exposure. However, there were definitely changes in how all business was conducted. Social distancing, masks, temperature checks, acrylic protection barriers, limiting the number of people allowed in offices – these were the types of changes that were made in order to continue doing business safely. At the Union County Courthouse, we continue with these protections as directed by the Chief Judge of the Enotah Judicial Circuit.

Q. Did the county lay off any employees when we had the budget (tax) increase last year? Did COVID-19 cause layoffs?

A. Absolutely not. We have a minimum number of employees already for our population totals and cannot and will not put ourselves in a position of not being able to provide proper services to our residents. We are losing some employees now due to COVID-19 in our departments, and it is nearly impossible to find replacements. We just recently placed our Road Dept employees

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

End Extended Unemployment

Dear Governor Kemp,

On behalf of the hardworking Georgians of the 51st State Senate District, I sincerely thank you for your bold, conservative leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. By implementing a measured approach that protected both lives and livelihoods, Georgia has weathered the storm and we are on our way to a full economic recovery. While traveling throughout my District and other parts of the state the consistent concern in every community and industry is the government-created labor shortage. While we are still recovering from the economic impact of the pandemic, local business owners are desperate for employees – not customers. Every job creator agrees that this workforce shortage is a direct result of the federal expanded unemployment benefits, where employees are incentivized to stay home and collect government checks that often exceed what they would earn at the jobsite.

This labor shortage has caused many restaurants to alter their hours of operation and is having an oversized impact on the supply chain of every sector of the economy. In fact, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers cannot deliver their goods and services to their customers. Costs are skyrocketing due to limited inventories, and Georgia businesses – and consumers – are struggling to foot the bill. To make matters worse, liberal teacher unions – who have unbelievable influence and unchecked power – are keeping hardworking parents from returning to work by forcing local schools to remain closed to in-person learning. This is unsustainable, Governor Kemp, and it must be addressed immediately.

I am respectfully asking for you as Governor of Georgia to terminate all extended unemployment benefits immediately through Executive Action, and if necessary, include this important issue in your call for a Special Session later this summer.

Thanks to President Trump and Operation Warp Speed, we have a safe and reliable vaccine that is widely available and free. It is time for Georgians to get back to work.

This is a pivotal moment in our state, and immediate, bold action is required. Thank you in advance for your quick response and continued leadership.

Respectfully,
Senator Steve Gooch

Tackling Lake Issues

Dear Editor,

Lake Nottley, one of the many gems of North Georgia and of Union county, is a beautiful place. Union county gets a lot of business from people visiting and using the lake, but we have issues that our community needs to work on.

I have just gone to my second meeting of the Lake Nottley Improvement Association, a devoted group of people trying to improve and protect the lake and surrounding shorelines. I have been a member of this group for around three years, and if you use the lake at all, you really should consider becoming a member. Whether you fish or just take the family for swimming and picnics on the lake, you should join. The more people as members in the association, the better our voices and ideas and solutions to problems will be heard when there are issues to address.

That said, two of the biggest issues at hand are to make sure we have good water quality, and keeping the lake clean from natural debris as well as trash from people who are too careless to pick up after themselves.

I saved for many years to have a house on the lake, but I am not rich, nor do I live in a palace. But I live here year round, so I am witness to the trash and debris in the lake. I think everyone that uses the lake should have a concern about lake cleanliness, whether it is debris or water quality.

See Lausier, page 5A



Letters to the Editor

Natural Beauty Marred by Trash

Dear Editor,

On the morning of May 8, I took a walk in Meeks Park to enjoy the gorgeous rhododendrons, mountain laurel and trillium. As beautiful as the park always is, it was especially so that day with so much in bloom. Unfortunately, though, this beauty was marred by trash left by inconsiderate or unthinking people. On the trail through the woods next to the large wooden chair adjacent to one of Al Garnto's kinetic sculptures, there were empty Styrofoam and other beverage containers, potato chip bags, a Pop-Tarts wrapper, a Jack Link's bag, gum wrappers and a cigarillos bag.

As if this were not bad enough, on a bench near the kayak launch area, there was a mostly empty container of raw chicken livers and several chicken livers on top of the bench! I assume these were to be used for bait, but there were no fishermen nearby and it looked as if they had been there for awhile.

Parents, teach your children, and children, teach your parents to not litter! No matter if you're young, old, or in-between, PLEASE teach respect for others, as well as yourself, and don't spoil our beautiful Meeks Park.
Martha Miller

GOP vs DNC

Dear Editor,

It is a fact that the Earth is getting hotter. The Democratic Party is on target with its mandate to curb the basis for global warming for future generations; but, the Republican Party is also correct that a strong economy is a necessity for the success of future generations and it must not be sacrificed to enact the Democratic effort. In reality, the only way that global warming can be tempered is by the development of new innovations of old processes coupled with new discoveries and inventions. To enact these requirements, incentives must be established along with new policies to force industries and governments out of their comfort zones and for them to accept the challenge as a business investment. Without dramatic changes to how we do business, Earth will not exist for future generations.

The Republicans and Democrats in Congress must come together and form a plan of action. It is not OK, if not illegal, for Mitch McConnell to declare that, as Senate Minority Leader, he will block all of Biden's agenda. Biden's passing of the \$1.9 trillion COVID relief plan without GOP support, because he could, was not OK. The relief plan was overkill and issued to more than those who truly needed it. Hopefully, the \$2 trillion non-infrastructure infrastructure proposal

See Tornabene, page 5A

Some Things Never Change

There is change all about us in our everyday lives. Sometimes these changes are good. A good case in point is that during the COVID lockdown of last spring, people adapted and began conducting meetings via Zoom over the internet. We quickly found out that business could be conducted this way and save money for businesses. Some change is not so good. An example of this is the amount of traffic we now experience around Blairsville. There was a point in time when the traffic flow was less intense and safer for the public. As you can see, change is a part of our everyday lives, and we must adapt or get left behind.

During our lifetimes we have witnessed many changes in our surroundings. My grandparents experienced changes in transportation, politics and technology. And I think the rate of change has increased during our lifetimes. Some of these changes have been good and some are not so good. Some of the changes predicted for the future are downright scary.

Personally, I take great comfort in things that do not change. The mountains around us are a good example. The Blue Ridge was here when some of my ancestors saw it for the first time 800 years ago. The same mountains were here when John Michael Cromer first arrived in Charleston in 1752. The Blue Ridge was here when his son Jacob fought with George Washington to help create the country. The Blue Ridge was here when Spencer Cummins crossed them to settle in Alabama in the 1840s. Many times, I wonder if any of these people heard the 17-year Locusts which you and I can hear this year in 2021.

This year, these Periodical Cicadas have emerged, and if you take the time to listen, you can hear them. I have been told that it will be a good year for wild Turkey Poults and Copper Head Snakes because the Cicadas are an excellent food source for these critters. I have read that the Cherokee cooked and ate them due to their high protein content. If you are a student of the Bible, you would know that it says John the Baptist ate them.

I experienced the sound of the Periodical Cicada for the first time when I was 11 years old. I can remember wondering about the whirring sound they make. Back in those days, it seemed the sound was much louder than today.

The second time I heard them was a few years after I had begun working as a County Agent in Dade County, Georgia. It was the same year my oldest son was born, and I was 28 years old. My life had begun to speed up at this point.

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Soil Amendments

There are many different things that you can add to your soil. You may see ads for different products claiming that they'll do miracles for your garden. Alternatively, maybe you've always seen your grandparents put a special mixture on their soil and it did wonderfully every year. Soil is alive with microbes and complex chemical reactions that are happening all the time. The amendments that we add may be helpful to those processes.

Let's talk about some common soil amendments and what they do to the soil.

Real quick, what is a soil amendment? These amendments have nothing to do with our constitution. Rather, they are things that we mix in or incorporate into the soil. The overall goal of an amendment is to improve soil quality. That may be done by adjusting pH, adding nutrients, building organic matter, increasing soil biodiversity, or improving soil drainage. Amendments can be organic (from something that was alive) or inorganic (mined or man-made).

Fertilizer and lime are two of the most obvious soil amendments. Synthetic fertilizer provides a quick boost to the plants, but doesn't really improve soil quality over time. Organic fertilizers must be broken down to be available to the plants, therefore, they will fertilize over a period. Lime raises the pH of the soil and makes the nutrients more available to plants. You can have too much of a good thing and over apply lime, resulting in a pH that is too high.

Coffee grounds can be added to soil. They will build organic matter in the soil. They also attract earthworms. Coffee grounds don't have a big impact on the soil pH if you rinse them first. They can also be used in compost as a green material because they have nitrogen.

Compost is another amendment that people like to use. Compost is a great way to boost the quality of your soil because it builds organic matter. Compost will release nutrients to your soil over time. Releasing nutrients over time makes your plants use the nutrients more efficiently and gives you even growth throughout the season. One issue with growing plants in compost is that compost raises the pH of the soil. Growing in 100% compost can lead to nutrient deficiency problems because the pH is too high. Mixing compost with soil will help alleviate this problem.

Mycorrhizae can be added to the soil. Mycorrhizae are a fungus that attach to the roots of your plants. This fungus becomes like an additional network of roots. They will pass nutrients up the plant and the plant will send energy down

See Williams, page 5A

North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

Kenneth West Publisher/Owner Shawn Jarrard General Manager/Editor Derek Richards Advertising Director Todd Forrest Sports Editor Lowell Nicholson Photographer

Website: www.nganews.com • Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com • Mail: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

The North Georgia News is an independent and nonpartisan publication. As such, third-party views contained herein are not necessarily the opinions or positions of this newspaper, e.g. advertising, press releases, editorial content, perspectives expressed in articles covering local events, etc.

Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - One Year \$40. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$5. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 17, 1988, at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. Phone: 706-745-6343 Fax: 706-745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514

Paris... continued from Page 4A

on 5, 10 hour days because of not enough employees to get our required work done. This means we will have to pay overtime for an extended period until we can either find some additional employees or we get caught up from the flooding events and the early Spring paving and mowing season.

Q. Last year when you were required to increase property taxes, several of the citizens that came to the tax increase hearing made it very clear that the county should be laying off employees or whatever else it took to prevent a property tax increase. Why did you continue to support the increase?

A. Union County has ALWAYS had one of the lowest property tax rates in the State of Georgia since I have been in office the past 20 years. It was very disappointing to hear certain folks at the public hear-

ings who just did not or would not consider a tax increase of any kind as being reasonable. The price of materials used in paving, construction, and general maintenance have been sky rocketing. New legislation increasing the minimum wage is also impacting our ability to hire skilled labor. Still, we continue to offer our residents the services they have come to expect.

For example, the Emergency Helicopter service that is provided by the county and by Union General Hospital - It is just one of the many services provided to our residents, giving the best possible access for the lowest cost possible.

These things can and oftentimes do contribute towards the need for a larger budget, but in the end, our goal is to protect you, the residents of Union County, and on this task we will not falter.

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

I was busy with things at work, and Will was born on June 10th. But, during May, I found out that other animals experienced a veritable feast on these Periodical Cicadas. After they emerged in May of that year, I went fishing on Lookout Creek and found that the Shell Crackers and bass would not hit the artificial lures I was presenting to them. After noticing a few of the Cicadas falling into the water and being consumed by the fish, I decided to use them for bait and soon had a stringer of fish to take home. I also noticed that frogs, snakes and birds were all feeding on the dark-colored Cicadas.

The next time I heard them was another busy year for me. A friend was helping me to build a barn beside my home here in Blairsville. I was feverishly working trying to get a roof built over the barn, and in between strikes of the hammer, I could hear the high-pitched whirring sound of the Periodical Cicada. The sound was almost intoxicating to me, and there were times when I would just sit and listen. As I sat on that roof, I could see songbirds flitting about carrying the large insects in their mouths back to their nests. Their young didn't

know these things only emerge every 17 years. They just concentrated on eating and growing. I don't know if some aspiring Ph.D. student has ever conducted a research study on the growth rate of wildlife during the same year of emergence of these Periodical Cicadas. But, it seems to me that it would be a good subject to research.

This is my 62nd year, and once again, I find myself listening to the Periodical Cicadas. I find great pleasure and comfort in this sound. This year, I think I have realized that the sound of the Cicadas is a way to get me to slow down and listen. We only get to hear these insects once every 17 years. So, for me personally, I want to take the time to enjoy the sound. I have come to view these insects as old friends. You know, the kind of friend that you only get to see every now and then. So, take the time to enjoy them, because soon, they will be gone again for another long period of time. I think God provides things like the Cicadas in our lives because he knows we need to know that, even though major changes keep coming our way, there are some things which are steadfast.

Lausier... continued from Page 4A

This group organizes lake cleanup days twice a year that the whole community can participate in. This spring and last spring was an eye-opening experience in the amount of debris that flows into the lake from the southern end going north (since I don't live on the north end, I cannot speak to the natural debris found up there). Living on the southern end of the lake in the spring is for me an exercise in debris management as I work to keep my shoreline clean. But this year was worse by far than any other I have experienced, with huge logs, some clean cut at both ends, half decayed logs and trees that have fallen in the lake. Remarkably, some people throw trimmed brush and limbs, and LUMBER into the lake, expecting the current to carry it away, resulting in mounds and mounds of debris that are quite dangerous to

docks and boats alike.

The people from the Nottely River area up Canal Lake to the Nottely Marina know full well the amount of trash that comes floating along. The logs often become waterlogged and sink to varying depths below the surface, lurking unseen to create hazards for boaters. If you have never struck a sunken log, I can assure you, it is a traumatic as well as costly event.

My community call is to get ideas on how our community can contain or prevent or better handle the spring flotilla of logs and fallen trees before they damage whatever is in their path. We all should be stewards of this beautiful lake, so we ALL should be involved in its care and upkeep no matter how little or how much we use it. So let's please have some of your ideas to tackle these issues. Thank you,
Eva Lausier

Weekly Patriot Reflection



States Rights

States rights have always been guarded with great vigor, so that the federal government could not encroach and impose laws rightly relegated to the states. But with most states receiving federal funds they are being forced to loosen their hold and the Federal government maneuvers and controls more of what rightly belongs to the states.

The Founders argued that strong local self-government is the keystone to pre-

serving human freedom. In fact they often referred to it as the golden key to preserving freedom. Thomas Jefferson said, "The way to have good and safe government is not to trust it all to one, but divide it among the many, distributing to everyone exactly the functions he is competent to perform best!"

In closing, we echo the words of Historian John Fiske, who said, "If the day should ever arrive when the people of the different parts of our country shall allow their local affairs to be administered by prefects sent from Washington, on that day the political career of the American people will have been robbed of its most interesting and valuable features, and the usefulness of this nation will be lamentably impaired."

A Patriot Reflection is presented weekly by www.joshuaswarriors.org.

Community Connections 101 is sponsoring a fundraiser for S.A.F.E.

Community Connections 101 is sponsoring a A Fashion Show and Silent Auction, Summer Attire Fashion Extravaganza for S.A.F.E. at the House of Prayer Family Life Center, 45 Bible Camp Circle Blairsville on June 26, 2021 from 1 PM to 4 PM.

Community Connections 101 is a local group of women with over 475 members. Some of the women are new to the area and some have lived here all their lives. Women are shakers and movers and

we love to be involved in our community. We have decided to take our involvement one step further and are in the process of coordinating a fundraiser for S.A.F.E (Support in Abusive Family Emergencies).

This is an event for women, by women, to benefit women. We will be modeling the latest trends & fashions. There will be entertainment, a silent auction and more.

For more information please email us at cc101events@gmail.com.

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

tradition which began last year when an in-person graduation was not possible. A special shout out to the Union County Recreation Department for allowing the digital slide show of all our graduates, another tradition started in 2020, demonstrating that good things can come from adversity when one lives in a supportive community such as ours.

Championing Chamber members is another of our top priorities. This past Thursday, May 13th, we welcomed some of our newest members to the Chamber: Traverse the Earth Travel, Gibson Land Service, A Balloon A'fair, Best Mountain Home Inspection, AirMed Care Network, Stockton Mortgage and Well Technologies Group. Thanks to all who participated

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

to the fungus. It is a symbiotic relationship. Mycorrhizae can be beneficial to plants, but they're not always effective. If there is too much phosphorus in your soil, the fungus won't grow.

Compost tea is made from compost. You add the tea to plants to increase the microbes there. We need microbes in the soil, and the issue with this is that we don't know all the microbes that we're adding. There could be E.coli in the tea. A simpler thing to do would be to add the compost straight to the plants, and not worry about the tea.

I would recommend caution when looking into new products to add to your soil. There are many things out there and not all of them do what they claim. If you have questions about soil amendments, contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

pel is such good news! Jesus said the Father "has sent Me to proclaim release to the captive...to set free those who are oppressed." (Luke 4:18). Oppressed by what, you ask? He answers, "Everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin...so if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:34, 36). Step into the sunlight of that freedom!

The National Day of Prayer is an important reminder that "God rules over the nations" (Psa. 22:28), but you can pray for liberty any day. Join me in praying that Americans experience the liberation they seek, the freedom found only in Christ Jesus.

Tornabene...

continued from Page 4A

will be negotiated and end with both parties' support.

Congress is broken and it has to fix itself to work better for the American people. Congress needs new leadership; however, less than 24% of the members of Congress have been there when Congress was functional. The actions of many of the newly elected Congressmen have raised the eyebrows of the U.S. citizens rather than generate confidence in the legislative branch. We cannot remain idol and let "535 people in the legislative branch to limit the progress of a nation of 331 million" (2020 census). A special committee was formed in January 2019 with the task of offering solutions to what ails the legislative branch (time.com/5739796/congress-work-better/). The committee is comprised of six members from each party. They have delivered 29 unanimous recommendations. Contact your senators and representatives and demand that they recognize the importance of this committee ("How to Make Congress Work Better for the American People") and for them to give it their full support. "No idea for reform is too big or too small, and Congress has a long way to go."

Thomas G. Tornabene

Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



Bell ringing information at 706-745-5493

in our Ribbon Cutting Open House. We had a great combined turnout of ambassadors, community leaders and business owners who showed up to support their fellow members. If you were not able to attend, be sure to check out each Facebook Live on Visit Blairsville Ga.

Two events you do not want to miss are the Business After Hours at Kennedy Creek Resort and our Buy Local Extravaganza. Both have limited space available, so if you have not signed up, please contact the Chamber soon. Kennedy Creek will treat us to a fabulous evening at their new facility in Suches. This beautiful venue will be serving some of the best food in town, so sign up today. Buy Local, as always, delivers a great way to promote your business and this year is no different. Located in the new Sports Complex, local businesses will be bringing their A game. We are expecting to sell out, so don't miss this opportunity to reserve a table.

This past week, Hospital Week reminded me how blessed I am to live among the many who served Blairsville-Union County on the front lines during this past year. We owe those in the health care industry our gratitude for their hours and commitment. They are true heroes! Season after season, they serve faithfully, so let's continue to thank our doctors, nurses and health care staff. And in every season of life, let's never forget that life is always better in Blairsville.