

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Winter Driving Reminders

Everyone who has lived in Union County for a while understands that the weather here can be hard to predict, especially the winter weather. Union County can have winter weather, such as snow or ice, in one area and not in another. There are many times when the roads are clear in Blairsville but treacherous in other parts of the county, such as the south due to the higher elevation. These hazardous road conditions could result in motor vehicle accidents. Union County Fire Department would like to remind everyone of a few driving tips for this winter season.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Before we begin winter driving, we must get prepared. Drivers should ensure that their vehicle is in good working order and has good tires for winter conditions. If your car is not performing well, you may get stranded in these colder temperatures. Tires are extremely important. Worn tires reduce traction and increase the possibility of an accident in rain, snow, or ice. It is also a good idea to be prepared in the event that you are in an accident or stranded for a while in the cold. Drivers should create a Ready Kit with essential supplies that can be stored in the vehicle for such emergencies. These kits should include food, water, first aid kits, flashlight, blankets and other essential equipment. The website www.ready.gov has tips on winter preparedness and Ready Kits.

If you must drive in winter conditions, there are a few things to keep in mind. Know the weather and the possibility for hazardous conditions. There are many resources for determining the weather and road conditions such as local weather channels and GDOT 511. Please do not call 911 to get road conditions. The E911 Center is usually extremely busy with emergency calls when there is hazardous weather.

Drive slower than usual and do not let other drivers rush you. Keep a greater distance between you and the vehicle in front of you. Stopping distances increase dramatically with snow and ice. Turn your lights on to make your vehicle visible to other drivers. The last thing is pay attention. Distracted driving is a major contributor to accidents in good weather much less winter weather. Driving in winter weather can be dangerous. Being prepared and taking extra precautions will help keep you and your family safe during this winter season.

~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Restoration

People are attracted to restoration stories. That explains the popular TV shows about old houses, junk (“collectible”) pickers, and pawn shops. They appeal to a human delight with recovering and renewing value. They may even connect with a deep, personal hope that all is not lost.

Martin Luther King, Jr.’s niece Aveda King carries on the family legacy in her own way, advocating civil rights for unborn children and support for their parents. Her work grew out of her very personal loss. “I prayed often for deliverance from the pain caused by my decision to abort my baby. I suffered the threat of cervical and breast cancer and experienced the pain of empty arms after the baby was gone. And truly, for me, and countless abortive mothers, nothing on earth can fully restore what has been lost; only Jesus can.”

What did she mean by that? She experienced the restorative power of God’s forgiveness. Peace and a renewed sense of purpose replaced her regret and pain. This life transformation began when she came to faith in Christ in 1983.

Joni Eareckson Tada experienced her own restoration. At age 17, she was paralyzed in a diving accident. Since 1967 she has lived as a quadriplegic. Once, I saw her point to her wheelchair. “I thank God for this wheelchair,” she said, “because without it I would never have come to know and love Him so.” After decades of life and ministry she said, “I’m so focused on God’s calling on my life, which is to share His love with special needs families and to promote a biblical worldview on disability globally.” That’s what her restored life looks like.

Jesus’ early disciples were concerned about what they might lose by choosing to follow Him. He didn’t offer empty promises but pointed to the big picture. “Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life” (Matt. 19:29). He offered them, and you, a restoration to something far better.

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner’s Questions

This week’s questions/answers are a continuation of last week’s transfer station and convenience center questions, and they further address some of the inquiries we have received about recycling. Hopefully the following information will add clarity to some of the recyclable materials we accept.

Q. Why do we have to separate our #1 and #2 plastics to be recycled?

A. The terms “plastic #1” and “plastic #2” refer to a plastic container’s resin identification code. Put simply, this code refers to what type of polymer comprises a container (and not all plastics are created equal). Consumers can quickly identify which type of plastic a container is made from by checking for the triangle-shaped recycling symbol on the container - usually on the bottom or on a side label. Inside the symbol will be a number, 1-7, which is the resin code. This resin determines how quickly the plastic melts.

Q. Can you talk a bit more about what you mean when you say, “This resin determines how quickly the plastic melts?”

A. #1 and #2 plastics have different molecular structures, once they are molded into whatever item they are going to be in their initial production process. When they are recycled, they must be melted down to make new products. This melting process is where the issue of separating comes into play. Due to their different molecular structure, they melt at different temperatures. #2 plastics having to reach a much higher melting temperature. If the two plastics are mixed together to be melted, the #1 plastic (Polyethylene Terephthalate) will be completely melted and the #2 (High Density Polyethylene) will still be in un-melted clumps. This will make the entire batch of recycled plastic useless.

Q. Why do you not accept the other numbered resin code materials?

A. As with other materials in the recycling industry, acceptability of plastics into a recycling program is largely determined by market forces. #1 and #2 plastics are accepted into nearly every drop-off and curbside recycling program because there is strong post-consumer demand for them from manufacturers. Though

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

The Need for Leadership

Dear Editor,
About “30 years ago,” a very close friend of mine once told me that what this country needs is a benevolent (kind, caring, compassionate) “Dictator.” When you consider the self-serving interests in the world today that affects most every part of our lives, do you wonder if that isn’t who is needed NOW? We are one race - the human race - and together, we share this world. There is a need for one decision-maker who shares a philosophy and vision for uniting the world to live and work together.

Relate that to the inner-workings of a watch - different parts that must work together to provide trust in its accuracy, consistency and dependability. While the parts are separate, they are of equal importance. When one part fails, it becomes the start of more failings.

Throughout history, and dating back to biblical times, we have been warned about being divided as a house (a government, country, the world, the human race). Division creates failure. Isn’t it time to rethink our goals and look more for that benevolent Dictator who can unite this country?

Nixon Childs

Too Preachy

Dear Editor,
When we get your newspaper I normally enjoy reading the opinion page, but for several recent editions all I read is someone preaching at me on how to be a better Christian. If I want to be preached to I’ll go to church.

Sharon Hill

Who is He

Dear Editor,
A lot of churches don’t seem to speak about the Holy Spirit, which is part of the Trinity, three in one. God the Father, His son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. You can’t have just two because the three all work together to accomplish God’s purpose and will for us all. Once a person receives Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, then the Lord God sends the Holy Spirit to live in each believer’s heart to help us on our journey home to heaven. To me the Holy Spirit is like a sidekick, like Tonto to me the Lone Ranger. Like Gabby Hayes was to Roy Rogers. Like peanut butter is to jelly. They just stick together through the thick and thin of life. What I love about the Holy Spirit is He is always there to see me through each daily grind and to give me wise counsel when needed. He also has all authority and power to command His presence and to seek His thoughts and ways which are higher than mine.

The Holy Spirit never sleeps. Never gets tired or grumpy. Never complains or gets upset when I do something wrong. But with tender loving care, He convicts me of my sin and get me back in tune with His purpose and will for me. The Holy Spirit never has to make excuses because He is perfect in all His ways. He never stumbles or loses sight of what His duties are in God’s kingdom work. He is right on target with the right words to tell me when I go astray and want to do things my way, not God’s ways. The Holy Spirit is not just a helper but is also the dearest friend I will ever possess, like having a deputy on duty day and night to watch over me.

The Holy Spirit also brings me comfort and peace when I am faced with any kind of situation I can’t handle. He is there to guide me through the difficulties of life and helps me to stay calm amid the storm that is brewing until the waves of adversity subside. The Holy Spirit to me is worth all the gold and silver in this universe, for He makes me happy and full of joy that wealth cannot buy. Do you know this Holy Spirit I speak of? If not, He is only a prayer or a breath away and He longs for you to come and become a part of something that exists now and forever in eternity. The Holy Spirit will never force Himself on you but will welcome you with open arms; if you will just come and believe upon the Name of Jesus Christ, you will be saved.

Frank F. Combs



Business and Home Safety

IBHS - Protecting Your Business from Wildfire: Today, we are visiting the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) in Richburg, SC. IBHS is a research facility where fire exposure to building materials and landscaping is tested. A very large indoor test center where they build a house on a turntable blow burning embers at the house with large fans to test effects on various types of landscaping and building materials.

Wildfires are a risk throughout the U.S. and pose a significant threat to buildings and lives in wildfire-prone areas. As more and more businesses expand into the wildland-urban interface—or WUI, a term used to designate wildfire-prone areas where homes and businesses are also located—the wildfire risk to businesses will also grow. In this environment, business protection must take into account both the materials and design features of the building, as well as the selection, location, and maintenance of landscape plants, including grasses, shrubs, bushes, and trees.

This article by IBHS provides an overview of wildfire hazards, mitigation strategies, and useful resources to help protect buildings from the threat of wildfire. Most people associate wildfire damage with direct flame contact from the wildfire as it burns past the building. However, buildings also can be damaged or destroyed when they are exposed to burning embers and/or radiant heat. Building ignitions during wildfires occur when a component of a building is exposed to one or more of these three wildfire exposures.

Burning Embers - Burning embers and wind-blown burning embers in particular, are the most frequent cause of building ignitions. These embers are generated by the burning wildfire itself, as well as by combustible items the wildfire has previously ignited, such as landscape plants, which includes grasses, shrubs, bushes, and trees. Importantly, burning embers can travel for long distances before landing on or near a building. Embers can ignite buildings in several ways: Embers can ignite combustible construction materials directly when accumulating on or immediately adjacent to them. Combustible construction materials are those that ignite and burn such as wood, plastic, and wood-plastic products used in decking and siding. Embers can enter a building through openings, such as an open window or attic vent, and ignite combustible items inside the building.

Direct Flame Contact - Direct flame contact refers to actual flames from the wildfire com-

See Riley, page 5A

RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



The Well

Papa’s younger brother Clay was a young man who enjoyed life. He was the smallest of Lon Cummings’ sons. Clay loved being around other people and he enjoyed laughter. Whenever a crowd was gathered and you could hear laughter, there was a good chance Clay was in the middle of the group telling one of his tales.

Lon Cummings raised two girls and four boys in a three-bedroom house on the hill overlooking Cummings Creek. Mabel and Inez slept in one room while Pick, Coon, Clay and Pogy slept in another room. Pick and Pogy slept in one feather bed while Coon and Clay slept in another. One late summer evening an event occurred that effected Papa for the rest of his life. The boys had worked out an order of cross ties for their father. The railroad between Hamilton and Phil Campbell was being worked on, and Lon had secured the contract for 40 miles of cross ties. The boys worked at the sawmill for 10 hours of milling cross ties. The next day they would be delivering the cross ties to the railroad. All four of the young men collapsed into bed that evening. My grandfather said he was so tired that his sleep was filled with crazy dreams. The last dream of the evening he remembered was of him being robbed.

He said, “The dream was so real and then all of a sudden the robber reached out and grabbed me by the neck and began to choke me. I began to kick and scream for help, and then we rolled off the bluff and under a big rock.” Actually, Clay had an epileptic seizure and was choking his brother. The two boys had rolled off their bed and wound up underneath it. Upon hearing the commotion their Dad had run into the room, and along with Uncle Pick, pulled the boys from under the bed. Clay’s grasp of his brother’s neck was strong enough to require both Lon’s and Pick’s strength to break Coon free. His neck was bruised for days and he was always afraid of being in a tight place due to his experience under the bed. Clay’s epileptic seizures would plague him intermittently over the next several years.

During the 1930s, Papa and all of his siblings married. Not long after the marriages Mr. Nix from Phil Campbell sold 320 acres to Papa and three of his siblings. Each sibling bought an 80-acre tract of land. Papa hired his brother Clay to dig a well on his land. A man came to their place to “witch for water.” This fellow showed them where to dig the well and told him to dig down 30 feet and he would strike a spring. Clay began to dig while Papa pulled buckets of dirt from the well. After reaching a depth of 25 feet

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Chamber of Commerce

It’s that time again, when the Chamber gets to honor the Union County STAR Student and the STAR Teacher for 2023. The STAR student is recognized for achieving the highest score on this year’s SAT test in a single sitting. This student will get to name the STAR Teacher, by choosing which teacher that has made them feel inspired and for them to achieve their goals to the highest level. Keep an eye out on the NGN for the announcement of this year’s STAR recipient.

At the STAR Student Banquet, we will also recognize several additional students, teachers, and alumni for their accomplishments. These awards are non-traditional awards given to recognize individuals that have gone above and beyond to make our schools, community, and the world a better place. These accomplishments have included creating mentoring programs, completing the requirements to graduate when all odds were against them, and a Union County

See Chamber, page 5A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Crape Myrtle Pruning

Crape myrtles are a very common tree that many people like to plant in their home landscape or you may see them lining roads in towns. There are couple of reasons why crape myrtles make great landscape trees. The first is that they are very disease and insect resistant, as there are not too many pests that will bother them. Powdery mildew is the most serious disease issue that crape myrtles will usually have, and it rarely kills the tree.

Ambrosia beetles will attack crape myrtles, but generally they only attack trees that are already dead, dying, or stressed. Crape myrtles also come with a variety of flower colors, making them very attractive. Finally, crape myrtles come in a variety of sizes. Varieties range from dwarf to semi-dwarf to full size, meaning mature tree heights range from 3 to 30 feet tall.

Pruning is important for crape myrtles, because the blooms only form on new growth. Even more important is selecting the right sized variety for your location. If you select a variety that will grow to a good height for the spot where you’re putting it, the pruning will not be difficult, because you won’t be as concerned with managing the plant’s size.

Now is a good time of year to prune your crape myrtles. Excessive pruning can lead to problems with disease and insects, because the tree is stressed. Bad pruning practices are called CRAPE MURDER. Crape murder generally involves topping the tree, or cutting back all the branches to 3 to 4 feet above the ground. This will result in an oddly shaped tree that produces a lot of suckers.

To properly prune a crape myrtle start at the base of the tree and work your way up. You’re looking for suckers, if you find them prune those off. Once you get to where the branches are, remove crossing branches. Crossing branches will rub against each other when the wind blows and create sites where disease and insects can get in. As the tree grows you can remove branches from the lower third of the tree. Removing those branches will expose the trunk character. Some people like to prune off the old seedheads. I think they’re an attractive feature. With new growth in the spring the old seedheads will fall off. On some varieties of crape myrtles you can prune in the summer after the blooms are spent to create another flush of flowers. A second bloom is difficult to force on varieties that bloom after mid-July.

A common misconception is that crape myrtles have to be pruned to produce flowers. This is not true. Pruning allows to you shape the

See Williams, page 5A

UGA extension

Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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 (Union County) - One Year \$45 INCLUDING UNION COUNTY CUSTOMER REQUESTS MAIL SERVICE. 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. 24, 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, GA 30514

Paris... continued from Page 4A

plastics #3 through #7 are recyclable, there is not a strong market value for them in our region.

Q. How do we make sure we are separating the items correctly?

A. #1 Plastic is usually clear or green and glossy and includes, water bottles, clear and green beverage bottles, cooking oil bottles, peanut butter jars, and salad dressing bottles. #2 Plastic is usually a milky or solid color. They are rigid and include milk jugs, detergent bottles, and shampoo bottles. Most of these containers are also marked on the bottom with a 1 or 2 in order to help you identify the two different types of plastic. As we discussed earlier, plastics that are labeled as #3 through #7 CANNOT be taken at the Union County Recycling Centers.

Q. Does this mean we can recycle our salad containers, fruit containers, and butter tubs?

A. Yes. You might recall that at one time we could not accept these items. We can now accept salad containers, fruit containers, and butter tubs if they are marked #1 and #2. Please remember to rinse them of food residue to ensure the recyclables are not contaminated.

Q. When we locate the correct bin for our #1 and #2 plastics, do we just dump them in?

A. Before leaving your home, rinse out the containers. Leftover food, sugary syrup, and/or cleaning products can ruin a bin of recyclables. At one time, we were required to take off the bottle caps, but the company that now buys our #1 and #2 plastics does allow the caps to remain on the bottles. When you bring those containers to the recycle center, just dump them into the correct container. #1 products go in the #1 labeled bin, and #2 products go in the #2 labeled bin.

Q. Will there be signage at the Recycling Centers to help us know how to separate our plastics?

A. Yes, there is signage to help you determine what plastic goes where. At the transfer station on Deep South Farm Road, each opening to the building is clearly marked. At the convenience centers, the roll off bins are also clearly marked. We understand that it can be confusing.

Q. Will there be anyone available to help us if we have questions?

A. Yes, if you have questions about this process, you can ask the recycle center attendants on duty.

Chamber...continued from Page 4A

student that went on to excel in the health care field. Be sure to come to this year's banquet to see who will be selected and the amazing accomplishments of our Union County students.

The Chamber will also be presenting checks to the Union County High School Scholarship Foundation and North Georgia Technical College, this will go towards their respective scholarship funds.

These funds represent a portion of the proceeds raised at our annual Shoot for the Stars golf tournament. Thanks

to the participants, Butternut Creek Golf Course, and our great sponsors, we have been able to again increase this year's contribution to the future of our students and our future workforce.

Be sure to go to the Chamber website at visitblairsville.com and get your ticket today. Tickets are limited so don't miss out on an opportunity to honor our local students as they, Shoot for the Stars!

Thanks to these students, teachers, and alumni, Life is Better in Blairsville!

Cummings...continued from Page 4A

Clay experienced another epileptic seizure. Granny and her brother-in-law, Denver, were also with Papa that day.

Denver said, "Coon, remember how Clay nearly choked you to death when you were boys? If I were you I would climb down that well and knock him out so he couldn't do it again." A flood of memories rushed through Papa's mind as he climbed down the rope. When he got to Clay he lovingly and with no malice punched Clay as hard as he could right between the eyes. Papa tied a rope around his brother while Denver and Granny pulled him from the well.

The two Cummings brothers told and retold this story for years. No, Clay never held any hard feelings toward his brother due to this event.

It was a story of which they both could laugh for years afterward.

Williams... continued from Page 4A

tree. If you have a spot where the tree can grow and does not need shaping for space concerns, pruning is not necessary. I encourage everyone to do some research on finding the variety that will fit in the space that they have, because that will solve a lot of pruning issues before they arise. Pruning crape myrtles properly allows accentuates the natural beauty that they have.

If you have questions about crape myrtle pruning contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Riley...continued from Page 4A

ing into contact with buildings or combustible items attached to or near the building.

Radiant Heat - Fire generates radiant heat and if it is high enough and the duration is long enough, radiant heat can ignite a combustible product or break the glass in a window. Additionally, exposures to lower levels of radiant heat can preheat materials, making them easier to ignite from a direct flame contact exposure. Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) represent the wildfire hazard in a particular area based on an evaluation of the plants and landscaping, fire history, slope and other terrain features that may impact the growth and spread of fire. Building vulnerabilities are generally addressed on a component-by-component basis, and typically include the roof, exterior walls, windows, deck and other attachments, vents, and gutters, as well as design features that can affect the vulnerability of a given component.

Roofs - Since the roof is a large, relatively horizontal surface covering the building, it is often considered the most vulnerable component, particularly from an ember exposure perspective. Fire ratings for roof coverings are either Class A, B or C. IBHS recommends a Class A covering. For low-slope roofs, a Class A-rated roof cover includes testing and rating of the entire roof system assembly, which includes the roof cover, insulation, vapor or air barriers, and the type of deck.

Examples of roof systems considered to be Class A regardless of the deck type include built-up roofing and ballasted single-ply membranes. There are a number of Class A-rated steep-slope roof coverings, including asphalt composition shingles, clay tile and steel. Some Class A tile designs provide for an opening at the eave end and ridge. These openings should be plugged with a noncombustible material to minimize entry of embers in the area under the roof covering.

Windows - Using dual-paned windows with tempered glass will reduce the vulnerability of windows. Operational windows should have metal screens covering those sections that can open.

Vents - At a minimum, vents should be covered with 1/8-inch noncombustible metal, mesh screening. This will minimize the size of embers that can enter into the attic or crawlspace area. Vents that are perpendicular to the flow of wind, such as a gable end vent or those in under-eave blocking, are more vulnerable to ember entry. Ridge vents that are rated to resist the entry of wind-driven rain or vents in boxed-in under-eave construction are better options.

Exterior Walls - Non-combustible siding materials

Gov. Kemp presents Budget Recommendations to General Assembly

Governor Brian P. Kemp presented his recommendations for the AFY 2023 and FY 2024 budgets to the General Assembly today via the annual Budget Report. The items included within the report are designed to meet the state's financial obligations while also investing in the education, health, and safety of its citizens and to

maintain Georgia's position as the best state in the country to live, work, and raise a family.

These proposals follow yet another record-breaking year for Georgia's economy, with unprecedented levels of new jobs and investments announced throughout the state in 2022.

To further expound on

the benefits of the AFY 2023 and FY 2024 budget proposals, Governor Kemp will address the Joint Budget Hearings next week remotely from Davos, Switzerland, where he will be sharing with world leaders why Georgia's conservative record and economic success story can serve as a model for other states and nations.

NTJan18.Z13/CA

Georgia December Net Tax Revenues Up 7.5%

The State of Georgia's net tax collections in December totaled nearly \$3.21 billion, for an increase of \$224.9 million, or 7.5 percent, compared to December 2021 when net tax collections totaled \$2.98 billion. Year-to-date, net tax collections totaled \$15.82 billion, for an increase of \$966.6 million, or 6.5 percent, over FY 2022 through six months.

The changes within the following tax categories account for December's overall

net tax revenue increase:

Individual Income Tax: Net Individual Income Tax collections totaled roughly \$1.44 billion, for a decrease of \$100.1 million, or -6.5 percent, compared to FY 2022 when net Individual Tax revenues totaled \$1.54 billion.

The following notable components within Individual Income Tax combine for the net decrease:

Individual Income Tax refunds issued (net of voided

checks) increased by \$17.1 million or 41.4 percent;

Individual Withholding payments decreased by \$55.1 million, or -4 percent, compared to last year;

Individual Income Tax Return payments increased \$15.7 million, or 114.9 percent, over last year;

All other Individual Tax categories, including Estimated Return payments, were down a combined \$43.6 million

NTJan18.Z10/CA