

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Severe Weather Preparedness Week

Although we are in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must also be aware and prepare for other events and disasters. Preparing for Severe Weather Events is one part of Union County Emergency Management Agency's (UCEMA) goal to create a prepared and resilient community.

Our weather is ever changing and at times, unpredictable. It can also spring up quickly. At a moment's notice, tornadoes, thunderstorms, floods, or other severe weather events can strike Union County. That is why Union County Emergency Management Agency, in partnership with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency, are encouraging all residents to participate in Severe Weather Preparedness Week, February 1-5, to prepare for the possibility of a disaster.

Severe Weather Preparedness Week begins with Family Preparedness Day on Feb. 1. Union County households are encouraged to have a conversation with their family about Severe Weather Preparedness. Families should discuss how to protect themselves during a severe weather emergency and what supplies they may need.

Staying informed about severe weather is also important. We encourage residents to purchase a NOAA Weather Radio which can warn families of imminent severe weather, day or night. They may also sign up for CodeRED alerts through UCEMA.

The rest of the Severe Weather Preparedness Week dedicates time to practicing response to specific emergency events and going through the procedures of how to deal with each potential disaster. We urge our residents to take this time now to prepare when there's not any severe weather events. Residents can be better prepared if the necessary steps are taken ahead of time. These steps and safety measures can be implemented at home and at work to ensure that people are ready when severe weather strikes.

Each day will focus on a different severe weather threat faced by Georgians. All of the following days focus on a different threat and how to prepare.

Monday, Feb. 1 – Family Preparedness/NOAA Weather Radio Day; Tuesday, Feb. 2 – Thunderstorm Safety; Wednesday, Feb.

See Dyer, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Graceful Unity

At the presidential inauguration last week, country music artist Garth Brooks offered truth. It was as though "the fragrance of the knowledge of Him in every place" had been revealed (2 Cor. 2:14).

As a solo trumpet sounded the opening lines, Brooks removed his trademark cowboy hat. He sang, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me." The verse moves people. Is it because we are lost and blind, and we sense it? Is it because we need God's grace to save us from this long night of the soul? John Newton penned those words from his dark experience as a slave trader, but his wickedness is no more wretched than yours, for all have sinned.

Brooks continued, "When we've been there 10,000 years... we've no less days (as he lifts both hands skyward) to sing God's praise than when we first begun." It is the most recognized Christian hymn in the world. Its timeless and vital message is for all who have ears to hear.

Some would claim that message is unity. For sure, we are divided by vitriol passed as politics, fear fed by the media, and coarseness embraced by culture. Earlier in the week Brooks said, "The message they're pushing is unity, and that's right down my alley, man." I guess that's why he asked everyone to sing along. I appreciate the sentiment, but that was a symbolic unity at best.

The push for unity can be deceptive. A call for political unity is a demand for the minority to capitulate. A call for religious unity ignores the exclusive truth claims of distinct religions. Calling for unity was not Jesus' method. In fact, he expected to be divisive (Luke 12:51). British Theologian J. C. Ryle criticized false unity. "People cannot believe that any earnest, clever, and charitable man can ever be in the wrong. Peace without truth is a false peace...unity without the gospel is a worthless unity. Let us never be ensnared by those who speak kindly of it."

Yet a unity in truth does exist and is attainable. Jesus prayed, "The glory which You have given me I also have given to them, so that they may be one...I in them and you in me" (John 17:22-23). Paul tells how that happens. "For you are all sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26).

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Local COVID-19 Vaccine Efforts

Q. What goes into the process of distributing and giving Union County citizens a COVID-19 vaccine?

A. As I mentioned earlier, the COVID-19 vaccine rollout for the state of Georgia is being managed by the Georgia Department of Public Health. Your local health department falls under the supervision of the Georgia Department of Public Health. They are balancing the scheduling of appointments with the number of vaccines they actually have on hand and the number of people they have on staff who are qualified to give the vaccines to residents. They must take those things into consideration to ensure they do not run out of vaccines or run short on qualified staff. Additionally, there are secure storage considerations for vaccine vials as well as physical location challenges for holding and monitoring vaccine recipients. All this happens while observing the COVID-19 protocols for masking and social distancing.

Q. What has the Union County Government done to aid this process?

A. It has always been our hope that the Union County community would be able to quickly gain access to the COVID-19 vaccines we need to keep our residents safe. For a while, we were unable to impact the distribution and administration of vaccines in our county. However, once the Health Department established local procedures and processes, it became evident that the Union County Government could contribute space and human resources to expand the vaccine effort. Discussions between our hospital, Health Department, EMA, school system, local government, etc., concerning the continued rise in COVID-19 cases and in deaths had already resulted in the closing of the new Recreation Sports Center. Therefore, we were able to open that space up to host a mass vaccination clinic. Volunteers, the EMA, the Fire Department, and others helped to document and administer 1,015 COVID-19 vaccines on Friday, January 22nd. We would like to do it again, but our efforts are directly impacted by the number of vaccines the local Health Department receives from our District

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

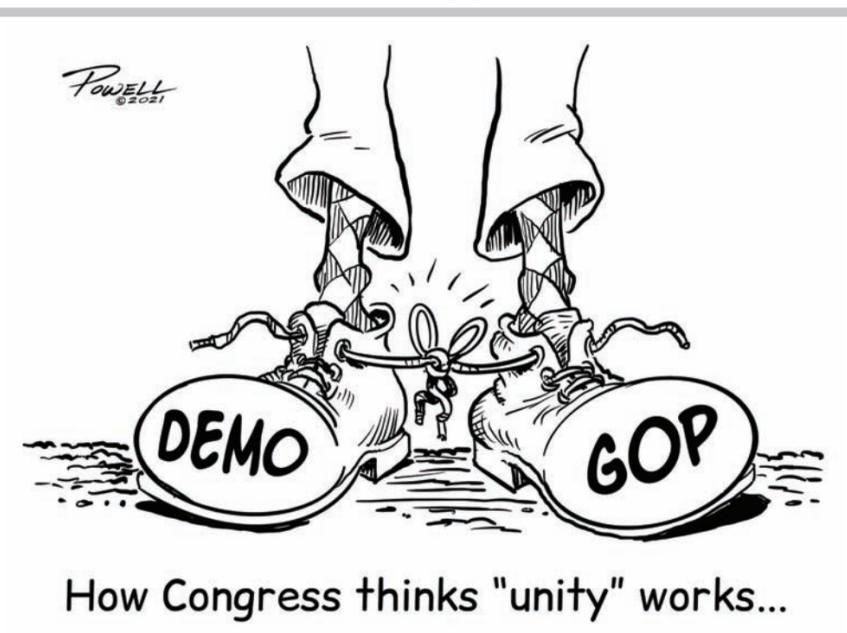
The Confederacy, Racism and "Normal" People

Dear Editor,

So typical. Instead of facing the issues, we'd rather play "Yes, But" games. We'd rather take the focus off the issue at hand by throwing shade on an entirely different issue, i.e. the Revolutionary War. The thing is, every one of us knows what the Confederacy was all about. I don't care how it's sugarcoated. I don't care if it's disguised as "Southern Pride" or wrapped up in a postage stamp. The facts are the facts: states' rights have always been a smokescreen. The only state right that was at issue was the right to permit and support human slavery. That was the real point of secession and the war. The leaders of the Confederacy were perfectly clear on this from beginning to end.

Many Confederates (and Yankees) fought bravely and even nobly. But no cause is made noble just by the actions of some of its supporters. Many of Hitler's soldiers fought bravely, some even nobly. The fundamental cause of the Confederacy was the preservation of slavery,

See Chavis, page 5A



Letters to the Editor

Hell in a Handbasket

Dear Editor,

Now that the election is over and Democrats control all federal government, we can expect our country to go to hell in a handbasket.

President Trump has done more than any president for the working people and for our country than any president in my 72 years. He is the only president to stand up to China, our main and worst enemy, put crippling sanctions on Iraq, and sowed peace between six different countries in the Middle East. All while being bludgeoned by a hostile media, Democrats and the Tech giants in Mexifornia who have silenced and squelched conservative views. One of my own grandchildren (yes, I still love her) voted for Biden because she told me she got her news from "social media."

In his first day in office, President Biden (God, I hate putting those two words together) eliminated 11,000 jobs just like that by shutting down the Keystone Pipeline, making Canada (our largest trading partner) very angry with us. Under President Trump, for the first time in history, the United States became energy independent, producing more oil than Saudi Arabia. The liberals and Democrats want to stop any kind of

See Crawford, page 5A

Re: Commissioner's Question

Dear Commissioner Paris,

This is in response to your Jan. 20, 2021, Commissioner's Questions column about litter on Union County roads.

You state that litter has never been a huge problem and that it's better than it used to be. I have lived here for about 3 1/2 years since moving from west central Florida, and the litter and junk on the roadways has only gotten worse year after year. I think you need to get out of your office and ride around the county and look at the litter.

What makes matters worse is that, when the mowing happens (not often), they mow over the litter and junk and make an even worse mess. I wonder if anybody thought of the idea of picking up the litter before mowing, which makes a lot of sense. This is what they did in Florida, and you didn't see the mess that you do here. We didn't move here to live in a litter strewn disgusting area.

Another thing that really bothers me is that the county has people blowing the leaves off the roads (Gibbs Road) instead of picking up the litter. How does that make sense? Don't you think that the leaves are less offensive than the litter? Someone needs to get a clue and do something about this instead of just talking about it.

Steve Gerenski

Uncle Pick

Walker Pickens Cummings was born Jan. 30, 1910. He was the older brother to my Grandfather, Coon Cummings. The younger boy adored his older brother and they were inseparable. Papa tagged along with Pick to many activities. One night Pick and Coon went to a church singing at a place called Saint Paul. Uncle Pick's girlfriend attended that church and had invited Pick to the Singing.

As was the custom after the service, Pick, who was 18 at the time, was walking his girlfriend back to her home, and his younger brother was right there with the pair. Coon was only 13 then and had no experience with girls at all. The elder boy loved his younger brother and decided to help the boy out. His girl had a friend which was also about 13. So, the problem was solved.

Coon found himself in an awkward situation for a 13-year-old. He was walking home with a girl and he didn't know anything about how to treat a young lady. Pick said he heard a scream and immediately thought Papa had got fresh with the young lady. As he turned to investigate, Coon Cummings came running by Pick and said, "She tried to hold my hand." The younger boy never stopped running until he reached his home on Cummings Hill. Later, he told me, "I have never been so afraid. I was only 13, and that girl wanted to hold my hand. I didn't know what to do. So, I ran."

Three years prior to this event found the young man and his siblings attending the Hallman School. He was the eldest and about to graduate then move on to High School in Phil Campbell. There was a little trouble that spring day in 1925. Pick was not involved but, the teacher thought he was and therefore gave him a whipping, which resulted in his back and legs bleeding. Pick never uttered a word. He took it like a man. Afterward he went home and told his Dad, Lon, all about the beating.

Now the boy figured his Daddy would go to the School House and give the teacher a whipping. However, Lon told his son, "You may not have been involved in this one. But, you must've done something to get a bad reputation with that teacher and make him think you deserved a whipping. So, I'll not take up for you. You need to remember your reputation follows you around like a young pup." Later, without Pick's knowledge, Lon visited with that teacher and made him realize that kids could not be beaten without consequences.

When Pick was 28 years old, his nephew, Paul, was born on his birthday. Papa told me he

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Blueberry Pruning

Blueberries grow pretty well in Georgia. Rabbiteye blueberries are native to the southeast, so they're well adapted to our climate. Let's talk specifically about pruning blueberries.

Blueberries don't need to be pruned every year to be fruitful. However, if you start doing some cane renewal pruning every year on a mature plant the bushes will be more fruitful and have more longevity. The ideal time to prune blueberries

is late winter because the plants are dormant. February is late winter for us in the mountains. Plants in their dormant state are going to be less prone to infection or stress from the pruning.

Blueberry is a multi-stemmed bush. Each one of the stems that comes out of the ground is called a cane. Cane renewal pruning is removing old canes from the plant so that there is space for new canes to grow. Ideally, under cane renewal pruning you'll remove old canes each year so that in five years all the canes on the plant will be completely different. Each year go through the plant and cut out the oldest canes that you find. Also, remove any diseased or dead canes. Ideally, you don't want to remove more than 25% of the canes in a single year. If you have a blueberry bush that hasn't been pruned for a couple of years it may take a couple years to get it back into shape. If you have a blueberry bush that hasn't been pruned for many, many years cane renewal pruning probably isn't going to get the plants back into shape. In that situation, I'd recommend something that may seem very drastic, but is better for the plants in the end. Mow the bushes down to the ground. Mature plants will be able to take this hit, and put up new suckers, that turn into canes. This is going to give you fresh growth, and a new healthier plant. You'll go without blueberries for a couple of years. Therefore, if you have several plants that need to be mowed, you could do a couple a year, until they are all back under control.

New plants should be pruned to have the healthiest plants. Prune back 2/3 of the top growth on bare root plants, and 1/2 of the top growth on potted plants. If the new plant has many canes, prune out all but one to three of the best looking ones. You also don't want a first year plant to produce fruit, so pick off any flower buds. If you prune plants like this the first year, the second year won't need much pruning. In the second year pick off flower buds again, and remove any diseased canes. The third year, remove diseased canes, but you can leave the flower buds on vigorous shoots. The fourth year, the plant should be able to handle full crop, but if you have some

See Williams, page 5A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber
President
Steve Rowe



Chamber of Commerce

Among the many tasks of the Chamber of Commerce is the opportunity to honor businesses, organizations, and individuals who demonstrate exemplary contribution to our community. Each year, at our Annual Awards Night, we are privileged to name the ambassador, person, and business of the year. Selected for their service and dedication to the growth and well-being of our community, those chosen are truly among the cream of the crop.

This year, our person of the year, is Mrs. Julia Barnett, the Chief Nursing Officer at Union General Health System. For her level-headed leadership of the nursing staff, for her heroic efforts on behalf of our community during the COVID-19 crisis, and for her faithful service to the citizens of the tri-county area, Julia receives this honor. For being on-call 24/7, for going without sleep, for consulting with experts and officials daily and at a moment's notice, and for doing all of it with grace and poise, we could

See Chamber, page 5A

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Working Together

Dear Editor,

We have a new president who has called for us all to work together to solve our great problems, and climate change actually offers perhaps the best example of a problem that both sides can work together on.

There are two solutions for climate change. One is government regulation, and the other is proper pricing on the production of greenhouse gases to account for their external damage and returning all the money to all U.S. citizens. Almost all economists agree that a carbon fee and dividend plan is the best policy. The primary reasons for this are that carbon fee and dividend (CFD) is better for the economy, better for the poor, and will reduce emissions more quickly. Since it avoids government regulation, employs a free market approach, does not hurt the economy and may actually add jobs, it has conser-

See Dixon, page 5A

Executive Overreach

Dear Editor,

In less than one day, Joe Biden has already undone many of President Trump's - and the Republican Party's - accomplishments that put AMERICA FIRST. Here are just a few of the many Executive Actions that he signed on Day 1: Construction at the Border Wall has STOPPED. Illegal immigrants will be counted in the United States Census. The Keystone Pipeline has been CANCELED, meaning thousands of jobs will be destroyed. Rejoined the World Health Organization that helped China cover up their terrible handling of the coronavirus. Reversed the travel ban to keep radical terrorist groups out of the United States. And, so much more...

See Terry, page 5A

Vaccine Logistics = Impressive

Dear Editor and Union County Citizens,

I want to thank our commissioner, Lamar Paris, and our fire chief, David Dyer, and all who worked so efficiently and effectively Friday, Jan. 22, to provide the COVID vaccine. I was very impressed by well-informed folks giving clear instructions and directions to everyone. No confusion, no problems, everything went like clockwork — well done. I urge one and all to get vaccinated if their health doesn't cause a conflict. We will beat this virus, because "UNITED WE STAND."

Thank you again,
Sharon Brazie Coleman

PS Special thanks to my good friend who signed me up on the website. Every time I tried, my computer crashed!

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