

Prescribed Burns

Some of you may have noticed the smoke around Union County last week. Most of this smoke came from several prescribed burns that were conducted in the Cooper's Creek area of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



The prescribed burns are performed every year when the conditions are suitable. U.S. Forest Service places a great deal of planning and preparation with various federal, state, and local agencies when conducting these controlled burns.

Weather plays a major role in decision making. The conditions must be dry enough to enable the fuel (leaves, downed vegetation, and debris) to burn but also wet enough to reduce the wildfire risk.

Fire managers and planners rely on up-to-date forecasts from the National Weather Service to ensure that they will meet their objectives and smoke management policies.

There are many reasons for performing these prescribed burns. Most can be found in the U.S. Forest Service Goals and Objectives for Fire Management.

See Dyer, page 7A

Your Label

Michael Shellenberger was a "Hero of the Environment" according to Time magazine in 2008. But he soon became disillusioned with the activism that earned him that label.

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



It's the issue of labels that interests me here. The prevailing zeitgeist demands labels. Shellenberger said, "The big issue for me is who am I? Everybody wants to know where you sit on left-right spectrum.

Shellenberger's intuition was right - a label reflects your identity. The danger with labels is shifting definitions.

Labels matter, and we all wear them. Some we choose and some are assigned to us. I'm a WASP (white Anglo-Saxon protestant), which is a pejorative in some quarters I suppose.

So, who are you, really? What label would you adopt that supersedes and qualifies all others? Is there a label that expresses your most profound identity, which you are unafraid to adopt even if it disagrees with the cultural zeitgeist?

We believers have such a label. It's a Person's name. Jesus prayed, "Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given me" (John 17:11).

See Fowler, page 7A

Commissioner's Questions

We have many pet lovers in Union County as evidenced by the use of our dog parks and by the number of animals we see in local businesses.

Q. Is there an animal ordinance in Union County?

A. The Animal ordinance was first adopted in September of 2001 and has since been amended several times, usually in response to changes in state law.

Q. Who is responsible for enforcing the Animal Ordinance?

A. Enforcement of this ordinance is the responsibility of the Union County Sheriff's Office who has assigned two deputies (Animal Control Officers) to handle animal control duties.

Q. Does Union County have a leash law?

A. No, our ordinance does not require sterilized animals be kept on a leash. However, it is the duty of every owner to exercise reasonable care and take all necessary steps and precautions to protect other people and property from injuries and damage which might result from an animal's behavior.

Q. What is considered a "dangerous" dog?

A. As defined in the ordinance, a dangerous dog is any dog

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 7A

Causes of Loneliness I

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

There are several likely causes of loneliness. One cause can be the loss of a significant person in one's life. It can be a romantic partner, a parent, or a close friend.

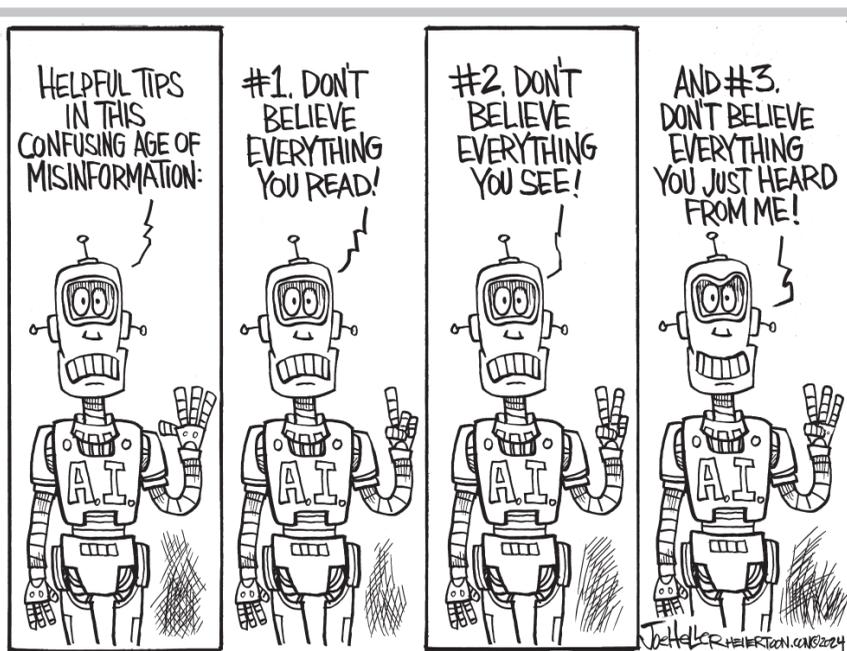
Successful Mental Health Dr. James Ray Ashurst PH.D.



Similar to the loss is the death of a marriage. Divorce is a definite hardship no matter what the circumstances. Being alone can lead to loneliness.

When a person experiences the loss of a loved one or a divorce, the individual can enter the depths of depression and even anxiety.

See Ashurst, page 7A



Chamber of Commerce

Networking is often described as the cornerstone of effective business development; it is critical to maintaining and expanding professional relationships.

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Are you a fan of golf and ready to support our local students? Then call the Chamber now to register for our annual Shoot for the Stars Golf Tournament.

See Chamber, page 7A

Letters to the Editor

Re: "Funding Ukraine"

In the Feb. 14, 2024, edition of the North Georgia News, a letter to the editor titled "Funding Ukraine" implied that if United States taxpayers had funded Great Britain and France, World War II would never have happened.

Re: Officer-Involved Shooting

I am writing in response to the front-page spread in the Feb. 21, 2024, edition of the North Georgia News regarding the GBI investigation of an officer-involved shooting.

Letters to the Editor

Protect Lake Nottely

This is a Public Service Announcement to citizens of Union County. Our neighbors to the east around Lake Chatuge are dealing with a significant problem of an invasive, non-native, aquatic weed called Parrot's Feather (PF).

This is not just a problem for those who have lakefront homes. This could affect the surrounding counties all around the lake, both businesses and private citizens alike.

The Problem w/Grocery Bills

The problem with our high grocery bills is the same as it is for our high fuel costs - the current administration.

And fuel prices promote the high costs to transport produce and other goods from farm to processing to store shelves.

Grocery store chains typically operate on very slim profit margins, sometimes as low as 3%.

Bill Gates is buying up farm land as are Chinese companies. Bill Gates is now the largest land owner in America besides our federal government.

When a farmer dies, his heirs can inherit and continue to work the land IF they pay a

The Funeral

My father is and has been a Baptist Preacher for many years. About the time I moved to Athens to attend the University of Georgia he was called to a church in Buena Vista, Georgia.

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



My Dad was asked to preach this man's funeral. The day of the funeral my father went to the funeral home before visitation began to meet with the family and the funeral director.

He waited in this room for 20-30 minutes all the while he couldn't help but hear a heated discussion going on down the hall.

Dad and Mom followed to watch. The funeral director approached the family which had by this point removed the man from the coffin and were in the process of removing his

To Burn or Not to Burn

We are entering the time of year when prescribed burns are more and more common. I want to talk about why prescribed burns are important.

To talk about the importance of prescribed burns we also have to talk about natural forest succession. Forest succession can look different depending on where you live.

So, what's wrong with allowing our forests to stay at the mature oak-hickory stage? And if it is wrong then what can be done about it? To answer the first question when all or a majority of our habitat is in the mature oak-hickory stage we have less diversity of habitat.

Watching and Working Jacob Williams



See Williams, page 7A

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Paris... continued from Page 6A

that: Causes a substantial puncture of a person's skin by teeth without causing serious injury; provided, however, that a nip, scratch, or abrasion shall not be sufficient to classify a dog as dangerous under this paragraph.

Aggressively attacks in a manner that causes a person to reasonably believe that the dog posed an imminent threat of serious injury to a person although no such injury occurs; provided, however, that the acts of barking, growling, or showing of teeth by a dog shall not be sufficient to classify a dog as dangerous under this paragraph.

While off the owner's property, kills a pet animal; provided, however, that this subparagraph shall not apply where the death of such pet animal is caused by a dog that is working or training as a hunting dog, herding dog, or predator control dog.

Q. What is considered a "vicious" dog?

A. A vicious dog means a dog that inflicts serious injury or death on a person or causes serious injury to a person resulting from reasonable attempts to escape from the dog's attack or is owned, possessed, kept, harbored, trained, or maintained for the purpose of fighting.

Q. Who determines if a dog is dangerous or vicious?

A. The animal control officer will make such investigations and inquiries as may be necessary to identify and classify dangerous and vicious dogs. When a dangerous or vicious dog is classified as such by the animal control officer, the officer will notify the owner in writing within 72 hours of such classification. The notice will include a form to request a hearing. The owners of the dogs classified as dangerous and vi-

icious will be expected to be issued citations for nuisance and/or failure to exercise reasonable care. The animal control officer may also immediately impound the dog pending compliance with this chapter.

Q. What about unsterilized animals. Are they allowed to run loose?

A. No, they are not. Every owner of an unsterilized dog, cat, or ferret, is required to confine the animal at all times. Any time an unsterilized animal is not confined, the animal must be on a secure and sturdy leash while being walked by a responsible person. Any unsterilized animal that is unconfined or not on a leash is subject to citation, confiscation, and impoundment, and, in addition to being subject to citation, the owner will be required to have the animal sterilized within 30 days. The burden is on the owner of a sterilized animal to have proof available that the animal is sterilized.

Q. Are there any exceptions to the ordinance pertaining to unsterilized animals?

A. Yes. Unsterilized working animals (including show dogs) are exempt from the above confinement requirements while working, but their owners are required to keep such animals under control. The burden is on the owners to prove the animal was working at the time of the citation. Owners who negligently allow working animals to roam and run free at any time are subject to citation and sterilization under this ordinance. Working dog means and includes, but is not limited to, seeing eye dogs; certified guard dogs; working cattle dogs; dogs whose primary function is hunting; and dogs which compete in conformation, agility, or obedience competitions.

Ashurst... continued from Page 6A

Young people, and of course adults, experience loneliness when moving away from home becomes an issue. The individual, so to speak, has to start all over again. The familiar then becomes unfamiliar and new. What a big task on the shoulders of the lonely person. This can create daytime "nightmares" for certain.

Related to moving away is the awful possibility of living physically isolated from friendly relationships. Just existing in physical isolation from any surrounding known civilization can be mind-boggling. Familiarity is gone by the wayside. The lonely person can feel involuntary

separation from others and even abandonment by busy, occupied people. What a miserable, lonely set of feelings and thoughts.

Extroverted individuals have it even worse because their very nature seeks out multiple social connections. They long for relationships because they offer comfort and satisfaction in life. A multiplicity of friendships becomes somewhat impossible because of the dilemma of possible loneliness.

Sometimes you need to take a break from everyone and spend time alone to experience, appreciate, and love yourself.
-Robert Tew

Burch... continued from Page 6A

June 27, 1950. Thinking was that if we didn't stop them there, they would be on the California coast soon. What difference did the loss of all those lives and money make? Well, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) are still at a cease fire, and U.S. taxpayers are still paying for troops to be stationed there. What did the U.S. gain by acting as the world policeman?

The next time the U.S. taxpayers funded a police action was to stop Communist China from expanding into South Vietnam. The official start of this police action in South Vietnam was with military advisors in 1954. On March 8, 1965, 3,500 Marines entered South Vietnam to help repel the enemy. Democrat presidents Kennedy and Johnson, following the "domino theory," increased the U.S. involvement, thereby losing thousands of troops and billions of taxpayers' money. March 29, 1973, the last U.S. soldiers left South Vietnam, and the "domino theory" fell apart with no inva-

sion of California. What did the U.S. citizens gain from all those lives and tax dollars lost?

Republican president George W. Bush entered the "Global War on Terrorism" following the 9/11 attack on U.S. soil. This action occurred between Sept. 14, 2001, and Aug. 30, 2021, with the last of this long war against terrorism being the death of 13 U.S. service personnel withdrawing from Afghanistan. What were the results of this police action that cost thousands of U.S. service members' lives and billions of taxpayer dollars? Iranian-sponsored terrorist groups are still a world threat.

So, as the U.S. taxpayers provide funds to be the world policeman, what are the results? Some will say we have not been invaded. What evidence do they have that this would have happened?

So I must ask, why do we keep funding wars whose only purpose seems to be to help munitions manufacturers profit while we the taxpayers loose?
George Burch

Gilbert... continued from Page 6A

scenario is becoming more common in this area as more seniors make this their home. Living with these issues does not come with a manual, and the predictability of daily living is not corrected with a prescription you can pick up at the pharmacy.

Mr. Cross' family did not at this point even think he was capable of getting out of his hospital bed much less retrieving a gun and discharging it. Mrs. Cross called first responders for help never dreaming it would result in the death of her husband. It is a tragic loss to all those who knew the kind and gentle soul he was. The "domestic dispute" moniker is misleading and hurtful not only for them but for those of us who knew and loved them.

Everyone here has a gun. I'm an American. I'm for guns. I'm for first responders. Their job is a hard one and they don't get the kudos they deserve. There are a lot of us seniors up here. All of us will eventually succumb to something and along the way we may endure the ravages of some of these illnesses. Let us pray our names

aren't carelessly smeared across the front page in like manner and first responders are better equipped to handle our crisis situation without having to pull the trigger.
Deidra Gilbert

Chamber... continued from Page 6A

Tournament. This year's tournament will be on Friday, May 10th, at Butternut Creek Golf Course. Not a golfer? Be a hole sponsor and promote your business while helping us provide scholarships to Union County students. With only 24 teams, it's crucial to register before it's too late. Not only will you enjoy a day of friendly competition but join us for the "Toss for Cash" for an opportunity to win \$500; or bid on that special gift to keep the experience going. We can't wait to see you on the green! Can't make it? You can call the Chamber and speak with Terri about all the sponsorship opportunities at 706-745-5789.

Let's make life better in Blairsville!

Cummings... continued from Page 6A

clothing. The funeral director asked them why they were removing the dead man's clothing? One of the man's sons said, "Daddy never liked wearing his socks or underwear wrong side out. So, we are checking to make sure you put them on right." The funeral director said, "But, you can't..." to which he was interrupted by the son pulling a .44 magnum from under his coat, and after pointing the gun at the funeral director, the young man said, "Yes I can."

During the funeral my father read the obituary which listed his original family. But the second family was omitted and of course everyone was confused. This was especially true when his first wife was mentioned. But the second wife was listed as his very good friend.

After the funeral my father walked down the aisle leading the family and casket to the front of the church. Daddy opened the door of the hearse and waited for the casket to be placed inside. At this point, the six sons of the deceased man's second family took the casket away from the pall bearers and placed the coffin in the back of a red pick-up truck. The funeral di-

rector approached the young men and said, "You can't..." The young man pulled out the gun and the funeral director said, "Yes, you can." Daddy said that he had never seen a red pick-up truck lead a funeral procession while hauling six men and a casket. The family from north Florida said their Daddy "always wanted his body to be hauled to the graveyard in the back of a red truck while a boom box played a duet by George Jones and Tammy Wynette, and no high-acting funeral director was going to stop them."

After the service the Florida family came to Dad to ask him about the obituary he'd read. He explained that it was his custom to read the obituary provided to him by the funeral director. The family started toward "Mr. Fancy Pants" when the original family met them. Heated words were exchanged and soon fists were flying. Dad and Mom made it to their car and watched as the Sheriff arrived.

He later told me that it was the only funeral he'd ever attended where people were arrested. I think they and that Funeral Director were just happy to get away unscathed.

Williams... continued from Page 6A

Historically, in the southern US, wildfires would burn parts of the landscape every 1 to 3 years. Now in the southeast it's estimated that 4% of lands that could be burned are in a burn rotation. With the development that we have now it's a good thing that we don't have wildfires raging through the southeast every 1 to 3 years. Controlled burns are able to keep the fuel load in the forest down to prevent that from happening. But if we don't have enough controlled burns or responsible timber harvest from public lands then we won't see the rejuvenation of the forest necessary for it to sustain a diverse group of species for generation after generation.

If you have questions about controlled burns you can contact the Georgia Forestry Commission, the US Forest Service, or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Fowler... continued from Page 6A

Me" (Jn. 14:6). His name is attractive because, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe" (Prov. 18:10).

Shellenberger changed his label to "Christian" while writing his book. Would you change your label to express your most profound identity? "Who am I?" is one of the most profound questions a human can ponder. So, what is your label?

Priven... continued from Page 6A

to \$5 and up to \$7 a gallon depending on the state where you buy it. So, you want to know why groceries are high? Three years ago, diesel was low, and the minimum wage was \$7.50.

Oh, let's not forget the unbelievable amount of government spending emanating from the White House without Congressional approval. The history of inflation over the past three years under blunder Biden is the cause of the current high grocery prices.
Mike Priven

Tarter... continued from Page 6A

federal tax on the value of the land IF IT WAS SOLD TODAY. Farm families don't typically have that kind of money to throw away hence all the developing of former farms around North Georgia.

All of these problems could be corrected or at least mitigated if a majority of the U.S. Congress chose to do so.

Your 401K portfolio is probably part owner of villainous "corporations."

Blaming grocery stores for our problems is a red herring dragged across the trail left by dishonest and irresponsible elected and unelected government doobies, truth be told.

In case no one noticed, the U.S. might not worry about fiat money printing, but the "BRICS" nations do. Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates (and possibly our fair-weather buddies, France) are planning on using another currency backed by gold rather than the fluctuating U.S. Dollar. This will mean catastrophic results for our economy.
J. Murray Tarter

Combos... continued from Page 6A

spread to over 275 square acres of the lake. The TVA was made aware of this and is doing a "study," that would be completed later this year. They also said they would only treat public areas, such as boat ramps and beaches. But the concerned citizens of the surrounding counties of Lake Chatuge are compelled to act more quickly, since the PF weed continues to invade new areas of the lake. Please visit SaveLakeChatuge.org for FAQ's and more information.

The main reason for this message is to promote awareness! The most apparent cause of the PF invasion was from a boater going from Lake Burton or Lake Raybun over to Lake Chatuge and inadvertently bringing the PF weed with them on a prop/bilge, etc. Lake Burton and Lake Raybun have had a PF problem for several years and have been working to control it.

All it takes is one small piece of PF on a prop, in the bilge or on a boat, trailer or gear to "infect" another lake. Therefore, if you are an angler, boater, or a company that leases boats/PWC's, PLEASE wash your trailer/boat/PWC thoroughly with water and

soap when you remove it from ANY lake, dry it (or leave out for five days), drain water from boat/bilge/live well/etc., and inspect the entire watercraft and your gear to ensure you are not bringing any unwanted plants into Lake Notteley. The best defense is a good offense. Please get the word out. LET'S BE VIGILANT TO PROTECT LAKE NOTTELEY!
Jeanne Combos

Dyer... continued from Page 6A

the right time helps maintain healthy forests, communities, and watersheds."

Prescribed burning has many benefits to the ecosystems of the forest and to the safety of the community. Union County Fire Department is thankful that these burns are performed each year in order to reduce the fuel loads and the fire danger in our area.

For more information on prescribed burning or burns in our area, visit www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/conf/alerts-notices/?aid=62790.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~