

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Flood Safety Preparedness Week

Flooding is the most common natural disaster that we face in the United States and is the second leading cause of weather-related deaths. Flood water can rise quickly, and most people do not understand the power of flood water until it is too late. It is best to be educated and prepared for flooding and flood water emergencies.

Union County Emergency Management Agency (UCEMA) is partnering with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS) for Flood Safety Preparedness Week from March 8-12. The week encourages residents and their families to prepare for the event of flooding.

Flood Safety Preparedness Week begins with Flood Safety, Preparedness, and Awareness Day on March 8. Each day during the week will focus on a different flood safety tip, the dangers of flooding and how Georgians can prepare before flooding happens. The themes for each day include Monday, March 8 – Flood Safety, Preparedness, and Awareness; Tuesday, March 9 – Turn Around, Don't Drown; Wednesday, March 10 – Flood Hazards; Thursday, March 11 – NWS Water Resources and Services; and Friday, March 12 – Partner Services.

UCEMA is encouraging all Union County residents to dedicate time to prepare for flooding events in their area. Preparing should start with developing an emergency plan for flooding events. Plans should include topics such as knowing what areas flood near your home; staying informed by weather radio or app; a communication plan in case your family is separated; and an evacuation plan in case you must leave your home quickly. Everyone should also create an emergency ready kit for their home that has needed supplies for a couple of days.

Of course, we all know that no plan will work unless it is complete and practiced. Everyone in the home should discuss and practice emergency response procedures for flooding events as well as other emergencies to know what to do and to be better prepared.

Flooding is one of many emergencies or disasters that can strike at any time. Education and planning are two major steps to prepare for such events. The information provided in the topics of Flood Safety Preparedness Week can help everyone be ready. For

See Dyer, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Healing Words

"See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity... (It) sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell" (Jas. 3:5-6).

Smith College is an elite women's liberal arts college in Massachusetts. It is suffering from too much attention lately, including a recent article in the New York Times.

Cafeteria worker Jackie Blair worked on campus at a camp for children during the 2018 summer term. One day when a college student entered the cafeteria, Blair mentioned that it was reserved for the children. The student ignored her and took food to a nearby lounge area. A janitor saw the student in the closed dorm and notified campus police per protocol. The officer made brief contact with the student but took no action.

That evening the offended student posted on social media, "It's outrageous that some people question my being at Smith." She claimed racial profiling and gender bias. She "doxxed" Blair and a janitor (who wasn't there). Her words set the world on fire.

The college put the janitor on leave. They initiated police sensitivity and staff anti-bias training. During that training, Jodi Shaw refused to accept the premise that she is inherently privileged and biased because of her race. She resigned and may sue the school as a hostile workplace, an ironic twist.

Blair has been harassed by major media outlets. After being turned down for a job she said, "What do I do? When does this racist label go away?" Recently retired Tracey Culver said, "We were gobsmacked – four people's lives wrecked. How do you rationalize that?" She said that because a law firm investigated on behalf of the college and found no evidence of bias at that dorm incident. The original offense never happened, though the Times insisted the student's deeply felt personal truth mattered more than facts.

I have no interest in taking sides here, but I do see this as an example of the power of words. They can tear down, set afire, and deceive. Or they can encourage, edify, and reveal. Speak quickly and you will say the most impactful words you will ever regret.

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Today we are talking about recycling plastics. Union County's Recycling Center is located at the transfer station - 3488 Deep South Farm Road, Blairsville, GA. Recyclables can also be dropped off at the convenience station located at Hwy 325 and Hwy 515 near the horse arena.

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

A. NGRMA, who organizes our recycling program, is always looking for ways to increase the money that is made by our recycling program. We receive more money if we can separate it instead of combining the #1 and #2 plastics.

Q. What is the difference between the two plastics?

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 with #2 plastics having to reach a much higher melting temperature. If the two plastics are mixed together to be melted the #1 plastic will be completely melted and the #2 will still be in un-melted clumps. This will make the entire batch of recycled plastic useless.

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

A. #1 Plastic is usually clear or green and glossy and includes, clear and green soda bottles, cooking oil bottles, peanut butter jars, salad dressing bottles, and water bottles. #2 Plastic is usually a milky or solid color and are rigid and includes 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. Now, there are also plastics that can be labeled as #4 through #7, and we CANNOT take those at all.

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

A. We still CANNOT take these items even though they are marked as #1 and #2. We can only take items with a screw

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Honor Behind the Scenes

We are always quick, and rightly so, to speak about honoring veterans, each of their branches of service, different military holidays and the like. However, there stands a group of individuals who make the sacrifice of service possible: military spouses. Quoting President Donald Trump, "Military spouses, who stand alongside our men and women in uniform, share in our service members' heroic endeavors through selfless service, immeasurable contributions, and noble sacrifices. Through their dedication to their loved ones, military spouses support the mission of our Armed Forces to defend our nation and preserve our liberty."

1984 ushered in a proclamation of recognition for the profound importance of spousal commitment. Proclamation 5184, dated April 17, 1984, was signed by President Ronald Reagan. The Department of Defense standardized the date by declaring the Friday before Mother's

See Walters-Taylor, page 5A

Military Musings
Janice Walters-Taylor



HOW THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DOES ELECTION REFORMS



"My remote batteries are dead. Guess I need a new TV!"

Chamber of Commerce

Here at the Chamber, we have been thinking about the future. I am convinced it is brighter than ever. From meeting with a young man named Landon Kight who is bringing a movement called "Bless Blairsville" to our community to helping students prepare financial projections at the high school, I have been surrounded by the brilliant youth of Blairsville-Union County.

The College Career Academy was awarded a \$3 million grant which opens doors for our students by providing skilled training that allows students to seek specific high demand, high wage jobs. The vision behind this program is that we provide skilled labor for employers in our region. It is one more way that we are preparing for the future by equipping our youth here and now. I look forward to the day when my grandchildren will benefit from the hard work and dedication of this program, and I am honored to be a part of it.

As COVID-19 numbers decrease and tem-

See Chamber, page 5A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Re: Litter Letter from Feb. 3

Dear Editor,
Another letter from a recent transplant telling Commissioner Lamar Paris how he should run the county. Trash is admittedly a problem, and the commissioner has done his best to address this issue. As long as residents continue to litter, we will have this problem. The county spends a lot of money to keep our roadways clean, and I wonder how much more this transplant is willing to pay in property taxes to eliminate litter? As for Lamar, he must be doing a pretty good job — he had no opposition in the November election. It goes without saying, we have two-way roads in Union County.

Peter W. White

Practicing Tolerance

Dear Editor,
In recent editions of the North Georgia News, you've permitted space in this forum to an individual that has numerous grievances against this country. Her disjointed ramblings run the gamut of our founding; its institutions; and the four-year existence of the Southern Confederacy (defunct since 1865); with each tirade somehow ending with a rant against former President Trump and the Republican Party.

Most publications typically limit letter submissions to one per month, or even longer. I'm partial to unlimited freedom of speech and the exchange of ideas, unlike what the political left does today in the mainstream news media, public schools and on college campuses. Perhaps you should consider the writer in question as a regular columnist, but her views would decrease

See White, page 5A

Tip of the Iceberg

Dear Editor,
I am writing today to protest the Fake News article that appeared in the March 3rd edition. I'm sure you know the one — the article about the Cherry Log criminal (he pleaded guilty to a felony) voting in our Georgia elections since 2008! Surely this can't be true. This has got to be Fake News, since Big Media and the Democrats have been screaming from the rooftops for months that there is no such thing as voter fraud. The article mentions that this criminal voted in 14 elections between 2008 and 2014. The article does not mention what happened between 2014 and the 2020 election? He suddenly grew a conscience and did not vote? I doubt it.

I did get a good laugh when I read the quote from our esteemed Secretary of State,

See Judsky, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Responding to "Drop the Term"

Dear Editor,
Unfortunately, there are no other ways to frame this conversation. If the Confederacy was fought for any reasons other than slavery, please elaborate... with historical facts. Maybe today (or maybe not), people of "good character and sound mind" recognize the "morally indefensible... affront to humanity" that was slavery, but there were no such "moral" understandings then. Gen. Lee supported the Crittenden Compromise to permanently enshrine slavery in the United States Constitution.

While awaiting trial for treason, Jefferson Davis was preparing to argue that he did not betray his country because once the Union was dissolved, he was no longer an American citizen (which holds different connotations all together for those who fought against America... and lost). Yet, an ad in the North Georgia News from Jan. 13 called Confederate generals and those who fought in the war "Honorable Americans."

So, which is it? Were they "Honorable Americans" or not? You can't have it both ways. If they were Americans, they were traitors. If they were something other than Americans, why should/would Americans want to have monuments to Confederate men, or fly their flags in places of honor? Why should these non-Americans be celebrated in any way?

See Chavis, page 5A

Thanking Local Government

Dear Editor,
Not too long ago, I sent an email to the Road Department of the Union County Government. My email described a drainage problem in the ditch next to the road that ran in front of the house into which my wife and I had recently moved.

The problem was that, even though I had a culvert under my driveway, my neighbor's driveway that joined my driveway where it connected to the street did not have a culvert. After a reasonable amount of rain, I therefore had a small lake at the front of my property. With the amount of rain we have been having, the lake was always there... sometimes frozen over.

A few days after sending the note, my wife and I noticed a man looking at our "lake." Not too long after that, a truck towing a backhoe showed up, and by the end of the day, there was a culvert under my neighbor's driveway and my lake was gone.

My wife and I commend and thank the Union County Government. They were wonderfully quick and effective in addressing the problem.

Joan and Joseph Lane

Wyatt & Gincy Cummings

My great-great-great-Grandfather, Wyatt Cummings, fought in that awful War Between the States. At the time of the war he lived in North Alabama. He voted for Lincoln because he was opposed to the war. When Alabama seceded from the Union, most of the people in his community tried to sit out the war for three reasons. First, they didn't own slaves. Second, they were opposed to fighting against the country so many of their ancestors had helped create. Third, they didn't want to fight against their own brothers in the South. However, the Home Guard tried to force my ancestor and others to fight for the South. So, Wyatt and his brother Absolem slipped through the lines to Savannah, Tennessee, to sign up with the North and fought the remaining years of the war with the 2nd Tennessee Mounted Infantry, a Federal Army.

There was nothing glamorous about this war. Many people died as a result of their wounds, and it was nearly 100 years before the Tennessee Valley pulled out of the depression caused by the "War Between the States."

Wyatt and his brother fought many battles in middle Tennessee, especially around the Duck River, which is located around Winchester and Tullahoma. However, neither of the young men was wounded. Unlike Wyatt, Absolem never made it home from the war. He died not of a bullet, but, of dysentery.

After the war, Wyatt came home first to a neighbor's house. At the time his wife, Gincy, didn't know whether he was alive or dead. Wyatt was afraid of sending letters home for fear of retribution from the Home Guard. Wyatt sent the neighbor's son to his home with a message. The boy went to the Cummings home and told Gincy, "There is a man down at our house that is offering you \$25 for your milk cow." He explained to Gincy that the man felt it was not proper for him to be in her home without her husband being present.

Money was hard to come by during that period of time and \$25 was a lot of money. Since Gincy needed the money, she went to the neighbor's house to dicker with the man about the price of the cow. Much to her surprise she found her husband whom she had not seen in three years.

We do not know what was said between Wyatt and his wife. But, the event must have been a joyful homecoming. Wyatt's son was only 1 1/2 years old when he left to fight in the war. Soon other siblings would come along. So, the family appeared to be happy and content. But,

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Raised Bed Soils

Last week I talked about the different materials that can be used to construct a raised bed. This week I want to talk about what we put in the raised beds. There are many different options out there, some are better than others are, and some are cheaper than others are. So let's talk through some options for soil in your raised garden bed.

Before filling up your raised garden bed figure out how many cubic feet of soil you will need. This is a simple calculation of multiplying length by width by height. Let's use the dimensions 8 feet X 4 feet X 10 inches. In this case, we would multiply 8x4x0.833 because 10 inches is 0.833 feet. The answer is 26.66 cubic feet. If we wanted to convert cubic feet to a cubic yard, we would divide our cubic feet by 27. This means that we have close to one cubic yard of volume.

Now that we have the math out of the way and know how much material we need let's talk about what materials can be used. Obviously, you can use top soil to fill the raised bed. If you have extra top soil nearby this might make sense for you. Otherwise, I don't think that it's a great option. Top soil is not regulated in terms of what is in it. So you might have many chunks of bark that haven't started decomposing. If you don't know the source of top soil, it could also contain weed seeds that will grow and compete with your plants.

Another option would be to go to the store and buy bags of soil that are made for raised beds. This would give you quality soil in the beds. The flip side is that you're going to spend a lot of money doing it. You could easily spend \$250 or more for soil using the dimensions I talked about earlier. If the money is not a problem, this is a quick and easy solution.

Compost is a great way to fill your raised beds. Compost that has completely composted will provide many nutrients to the soil. If you have your own compost you can use that, or you can buy compost in bulk. Some companies will deliver or if you have a pickup truck, you can use that. You can also buy compost in bags. A product like Black Kow is an example. Buying bags will be more expensive. One drawback to using compost is that the pH will most likely be high. This can lead to some nutrient shortages. Another thing to keep in mind with compost is that it will continue to decompose. This means that the amount you have will decrease and more will need to be added periodically.

The lasagna method is a popular way to fill raised beds. You alternate layers of brown and green material. Brown material is dry leaves,

See Williams, page 5A

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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