

Opinions

Everybody has one...

The Sneaky Visitor

The year was 1963. Being president of my sophomore class in college kept me hopping in addition to numerous other extracurricular activities. Also, my taking 19-hour course credits was an idea definitely on the dumb side. The beginning of my back pain was simply annoying at first, until...

The night it came to a head still lingers. The pain jarred me into consciousness from what started as a semi-peaceful slumber. Waking my parents prompted a call the next morning to our physician. After all was said and done (X-rays), the diagnosis was spontaneous pneumothorax, which is a fancy term for collapsed lung. Off to the hospital my mom and I traveled. The stay in the hospital was three long days, hooked up to a machine that would slowly and gradually inflate my lungs once again.

It was during my time in the hospital that I experienced an everlasting expression of authentic friendship. It happened one night after visiting hours.

The hum of the machine was my only "companion," which was anything but pleasant. The creak of my hospital door caught my attention, and friendship walked in.

Her name: Carol. She and I met when we were in middle school, and a friendship was born. A remarkable relationship that has lasted over 60 years now. Such can only be called: phenomenal.

Not one to let barriers get in her way, Carol quietly came up to my room by the back stairs. With a gigantic smile, she made herself at home, and the conversation lasted well into the night. Thank goodness no nurses came to my room to check on me. I had felt so miserable until Carol joined me after visiting hours, just to see how I was doing. True friendship at its best. Her action taught me the genuine value of caring and loving.

After three days, I left the hospital, very weak and sad for missing so many of my college classes. However, lessons in life arrive in multiplicity, and we either gain insights from them or ignore and deny their face value.

You can win more friends with your ears than your mouth. (Anonymous)

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



Ought to Be

I had visions of bright lights, a smoothly running stove bolt motor, and a responsive instrument cluster. But I was holding a rat's nest snarl of old spliced wires, sketchy terminals, and rusty switches I had just pulled from the dash of my 1959 Chevrolet Apache. My mind began to race. "What have I done? Will it ever be right again?"

It's too easy to give in to the restless fertility of bewilderment, when one frustrating question breeds another until hopelessness pervades. I'm thinking now about things far more significant than an old truck. How can one country invade and claim the sovereign territory of a smaller country? How can people attack and kill others attending a music festival? Why would college students protest in favor of the killers? These things ought not be.

I tell you what else ought not be: incurable cancer, broken homes, and deadly accidents. There ought not to be injustice, prejudice, and hate. I wish there was no need for hospitals, prisons, or homeless shelters. People ought not live separate from God and His plan for their lives. Is there a way to put this snarl of earthly troubles into perspective? Will it ever be set right again?

The fact that you have a sense of how life ought to be is a reason to hope. God placed that sense of "oughtness" in you as a compass pointing toward a future set right. Peter spoke about "the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of the holy prophets from ancient time" (Acts. 3:21). John described his vision of a new heaven and a new earth in which death, mourning, crying, and pain are no more. He heard the One who sits on the throne saying, "Behold, I am making all things new" (Rev. 21). Jesus spoke of "the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne" (Matt. 19:28). The things that ought to be, will be. Jesus will make it so.

I realize some dismiss this as "pie in the sky, by and by." They have no hope that the sufferings of life will ever be sorted. C.S. Lewis has an interesting response. "They say of some temporal suffering, 'No future bliss can make up for it,' not knowing that Heaven, once attained, will work backwards and turn even that agony into a glory." If your future existence in the time of

See Fowler, page 7A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

We often receive phone calls from residents who ask general County Government questions. The next few Q & A will share some of these questions and the answers we have provided.

Q. What are County Commissions?

A. Counties are one of America's oldest forms of government, dating back to 1634 when the first county governments (shires) were established along the eastern shores of Virginia. Governance and organizational structures vary, and they are on the front lines of delivering vital services to residents. In Georgia, County Commissions levy local taxes and administer county governmental services such as building codes enforcement, public works, recreation facilities, jails, courts, property registration, and public health oversight, just to name a few.

Q. How did we come to have these divisions in land governance in Georgia?

A. Most states have at least two tiers of local government: counties and municipalities. Each state government in the country has designed through its constitution and statutes the authorities and powers that counties may exercise. In Georgia, County Governments were originally created as administrative divisions of the states.

Q. What is the difference between incorporated and unincorporated areas?

A. Most often, a county government provides services to residents in both unincorporated and incorporated areas of the county. Incorporated areas of a county are governed by municipalities with their own government (such as the Blairsville City Council), having been established and organized as a municipal corporation as permitted under state law. Thus, residents in Blairsville receive municipal services (water, sewer & law enforcement) and some county services (fire protection and Parks & Recreation activities).

Q. What does the term "Constitutional Officer" mean as it relates to Union County?

A. In Georgia, a Constitutional Officer typically refers to a locally elected official. If the state constitution makes a provision

See Paris, page 7A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Inland Invasion

Joe Biden's intentional illegal invasion is coming to runways across the country.

Back in March, the Biden Administration admitted to secretly flying hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens to at least 43 U.S. cities. At the time, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) refused to disclose which airports received hordes of illegal migrants.

Thankfully, Americans finally have the transparency they deserve.

According to data obtained via a subpoena issued by Republicans on the House Homeland Security Committee, the Biden Administration flew roughly 200,000 illegal aliens into more than 45 cities between January and August of last year. President Biden and DHS Secretary Mayorkas flew these illegals through their weaponized parole program, which expands parole for Venezuelans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Cubans.

See Clyde, page 7A

United States Congressman Representative Andrew Clyde



Chamber of Commerce

We had a great week last week listening to what is going on in Blairsville-Union County, including the Hospital and the Schools. Thanks to Mayor Conley, Commissioner Paris, Kevin Bierschenk, CEO of Union General Hospital, and John Hill, Superintendent of Union County Schools, for taking time from their schedules to come speak to all in attendance. It is great to hear that the needs of Union County residents are being addressed from seniors to students.

There was also a ceremony at Union General Hospital in which Bank OZK presented a check for \$100,000 representing a donation through the Georgia Heart Hospital Program. If you pay state income tax, the Georgia Heart Hospital Program provides a possible tax credit equal to your tax paid. This program is designed to help rural hospitals while ensuring that your tax dollars are being used in our community. If you would like to know more about this program,

See Chamber, page 7A

Blairsville-Union County Chamber President Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Tax Dollars for Endless Wars

Dear Editor,
Judging by last week's letter to the editor, it appears one can be a fine purveyor of English prose, a Ph.D. in English, a recognized college English professor (retired), and still be dead wrong on the subject being argued. The writer of the letter titled "Ukraine" is a case in point, when the author says \$61 billion of American's hard-earned tax dollars are well spent, according to the writer, on the U.S. proxy war against Russia being waged in Ukraine. To repeat, the writer may be an accomplished English wordsmith, but still be wrong on America's endless war policy.

His premise assumes one very important, but flatly erroneous belief that somehow the corrupt state of Ukraine, lead by elements of neo-Nazis, will win a war of attrition against Russia. The U.S. launched Ukraine regime change operation in 2014 led by the U.S. Russophobes in the Biden administration and a bi-partisan Congress. But it is delusional to think Ukraine will prevail against Russia's superior forces in a proxy war on Russia. It is delusional to think that Russia will give up its right to self defense and that NATO and the West will win against Russia by stationing missiles on Russia's border with Ukraine.

See Jobson, page 7A

Dry Counties

Dear Editor,
Prohibition sounded good. In practice it was a mess. It spawned organized crime throughout the country and made criminals of otherwise upstanding citizens.

More recently I used to work in a one-hour photo lab down in historic Clayton County, "the home of Gone With the Wind." Clayton County was a dry county back then, so all the drinkers had to drive TO and FROM another county to buy their drinks. Consequently, we had a LOT of drunk drivers come.

See Tarter, page 7A

Thank You Deputy Phillips

Dear Sheriff Mack Mason,
I'd like to tell you a quick story about a Sheriff's Deputy who cares. We were going to dinner on a recent Friday night when we were met by law enforcement. When he pulled us to the side of the road, I just knew that I had done something wrong. To the contrary - Deputy Matthew Phillips wanted to alert us that our front tire was flat. Not only did he bring this situation to our attention, but he located the spare tire and the required equipment. Then, he changed the tire for us!

See Perricone, page 7A

Prescribed Fire Council

The mission of the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council is: To protect the right, to encourage the use of, and to promote public understanding of prescribed fire. Prescribed fires are used by such a variety of individuals, agencies, and organizations throughout the state that the Southwest Georgia Prescribed Fire Council was established in 2002 in a regional effort to encourage the exchange of information, techniques, and experience among practitioners.

In January of 2007, the steering committee, working with all partners, decided to expand, and become the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council. The state meeting has been held in Tifton each year in September with 300 or so attendees. Tifton is too far for most of us up here to travel for a one-day meeting, so we developed the North Georgia Prescribed Fire Council which is just a branch of the state council. In June, each year since 2018, the North Georgia Prescribed Fire Council has held its annual meeting in Jasper where 200 or so foresters, landowners, consultants, and others who use prescribed fire to manage their forests gather to share experiences and learn about new techniques for managing fire in their woodlands.

Fire is a natural phenomenon that has occurred in our forests since the beginning of time and maintains a natural balance in the environment. Some of our well-intentioned ancestors decided that they knew better how to maintain the environment than mother nature, so they created programs to extinguish all fires in the forest. Smokey Bear was the main culprit and used to say, "Only YOU can prevent Forest Fires!" and our firefighters worked hard to extinguish all fires in the forest which has led to build up of fuels that contributes to the out of control wildfires that we have today.

Only recently has Smokey Bear changed his moto to "Only YOU can prevent Wildfires!" In some areas such as parts of California changing the message is too late and now with the build-up of years of fuels, they are experiencing the largest, hottest, longest, and most expensive wildfires in history.

The Georgia & North Georgia Prescribed Fire Council members promote the wise use of planned and controlled fire to get our forests back in line with the way nature intended it to be. This platform allows the council to be engaged in prescribed fire advocacy across the state. Frequent fires, set by lightning strikes and Native Americans, have shaped Georgia's ecosystems for thousands of years. Our forest eco-

RC&D Executive Director Frank Riley



Church Memories

Papa used to "lay by" his cotton in August, which means he plowed and fertilized the cotton the last time before it grew too big to cultivate. After the cotton was laid by, we went to revival meetings for the next couple of weeks at the local churches.

I can still remember sitting in those churches during those revival services without air-conditioning. All we had to keep comfortable were ceiling fans and some of those hand-held fans on a pop-sicle stick which advertised funeral homes. My Granny would dress me in a starched white shirt and little tie. After the service the shirt would be soaked to the skin with sweat. And those black grandma beads would be in the creases of skin on my neck. However, if we could make it through the end of the service we usually had dinner on the ground afterwards, and someone always brought a pitcher of home-made lemonade for the enjoyment of us kids.

After the dinner on the ground the little church would host an all-day singing which everybody in the community attended. It mattered not that you were Baptist, Methodist or Independent, everyone came to the singing. I can still remember David Motes sitting with his long legs crossed on the front bench. I always wondered how he could sit in the same position all day and remain comfortable. But, he did and never uncrossed those long lanky legs. And when the congregation began singing "I'll Fly Away," he would let out the longest version of "AMEN" or "LORD BLESS" I had ever heard, and I never seen him without a smile upon his face. As a little boy, he impressed upon me the importance of church attendance because he came to every service like clockwork.

Another man, a preacher by the name of Curtis Taylor, is also one of my fondest memories. His family and mine had close friends for many generations according to my grandparents, and they thought the world of the Taylor family, especially Curtis. He was not very tall and of a light complexion with reddish blonde hair. He was truly a man of God, and when he began to preach his voice commanded attention. As his sermon began his voice would be soft and calm. But as he proceeded into his dissertation of scripture his face would turn red and his voice would rise and fall with a rhythm. His enthusiasm for what he was trying to convey in the sermon came out of every pore of his skin in the form of sweat and actions. He was excited about Jesus and Heaven and showed that to everybody by bouncing around the pulpit. Then as he

Around The Farm Mickey Cummings



BearWise

Black bears are active again. While people enjoy having them around, it's important to remember that these animals are wild. Sometimes, when you see the bear time and again you may feel a personal connection to that bear. That feeling is probably not reciprocated. Interactions with bears are inevitable to a certain level, so let's talk about what to do if you see a bear and the steps that you can take to make sure that your home doesn't become a playground for bears and that we allow these creatures to remain wild.

Firstly, it's important to remember that we live in an area with copious amounts of national forest. That means black bears are out there. Hopefully, though if you encounter one you'll know what to do or how to make your space less attractive to them. Bears will typically live 8 to 15 years. The females can weigh up to 300 pounds and the males over 500 pounds. The females will give birth in their den in late January. Those cubs will stay with the mother until the following spring when she kicks them out.

Bears are omnivores meaning that they eat whatever is easily available depending on the time of year. Their natural diet is berries, fruits, acorns, grasses, insects, and even mammals. Bears can be attracted by the smell of human food if there is not much natural food available for them. Bears are naturally afraid of humans. However, bears that have been feeding on human food lose their natural fear of people, and become a danger. Bears will usually remain in an area where food is readily available, so the best way to make sure that bears don't move into your backyard is to remove the sources of food.

Never feed bears either intentionally or unintentionally. They will learn where food is available and become a nuisance for you and your neighbors. Make sure that your garbage is in a place that they can't reach. That means leaving it inside the garage or if you're out camping hoisting your trash in the air or putting it in a bear proof trashcan. Bird feeders can attract bears because of the high calorie content in bird feed. Bring your bird feeders in when bears are active. Usually, by the time bears are active there is plenty of natural food available for birds. Don't leave pet food out. Just give your outdoor pets enough food for one feeding. If you have a grill, clean and store it after use. Bears will be attracted by the smell of your grill so keep it out of reach for them. And finally, let your neighbors know if you see a bear so that they can take precautions too.

Most bears are not aggressive, unless they

See Williams, page 7A

Watching and Working Jacob Williams



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Paris... continued from Page 6A

for an elected office, then the office is known as a constitutional officer. In Union County, examples of these positions include tax assessor, auditor, circuit judge, clerk of the court (judicial), coroner, judge of the probate, school superintendent, and sheriff.

Q. What is meant by the term "Home Rule?"

A. The Georgia Constitution specifically provides for "home rule" for counties and municipalities in Georgia. While county home rule is constitutionally prescribed, cities may be granted the same right by the state legislature. In both cases the county or city is authorized to adopt "clearly reasonable ordinances, resolutions, or regulations . . . for which no provision has been made by general law and which is not inconsistent with" the Constitution of Georgia. They are prohibited, however, from acting in nine areas: elections and appointments, criminal law, any form of taxation not authorized by the constitution or state law, activities otherwise regulated by the Georgia Public Service Commission, the courts, the public schools, and private or civil matters.

Q. What is a Union County ordinance?

A. Governments such as Union County provide services first by describing what they intend to do. These descriptions are labeled variously as laws, acts, rules, regulations, and ordinances. As a general rule, the word ordinance is reserved for local (county or city) use. Ordinances differ from the other possible labels in that they are limited to smaller geographic areas such as cities and counties.

Sources: *OpenDC*. (2024, April 29). *State and Local Government Primer*. <https://www.open-dc.gov/documents/state-and-local-government-basics>; *National Association of Counties*. (2024, January). *America's County Governments: A Short Primer on our History, Definitions, Structures, and Authorities*. https://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2024%20County%20Government%20Primer_final.pdf; *Chambers, Raymond*. "Home Rule and Ordinances." *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, last modified Jun 8, 2017. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/government-politics/home-rule-and-ordinances/>

Jobson... continued from Page 6A

The Kyiv government, with U.S. support, launched a civil war on the mostly Russian speaking and Moscow supporting citizens living in eastern Ukraine, killing some 14,000 people. This illegal aggression supported by NATO and the West against the Russian people and military was met by Russian military invasion. And yet, the U.S. and UK have consistently refused to allow Ukraine to hold peace talks with Russia. Recall, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson forbade a negotiated ceasefire at the Istanbul conference in 2022. It's so easy for U.S. leaders and duped followers to flush American tax dollars

down the drain of endless war, especially when all the war dead are Ukrainians and Russians.

Here's the bottom line with regards to what Russia considers an existential threat to its national security: No country or alliance of nations has the right to station lethal weapons on Russia's border. This was made clear for years before Russia was confronted by Ukraine's threat to join NATO. Americans need to look in the mirror and ask if we're right-on with spreading death and destruction in Ukraine, as well as committing genocide in Gaza with our tax dollars.

Lance G. Jobson

Clyde... continued from Page 6A

Some of the top cities President Biden flew illegal aliens into during this eight-month window include Miami, New York City, and Houston.

Notably, the Peach State made the list of the top 10 destinations.

President Biden flew 1,796 illegal aliens into Atlanta during this time alone.

Folks, this insanity must stop. President Biden isn't just incentivizing illegal immigration — he's flying illegals further inland. Keep in mind, there's no way for us to know who these individuals are or what their motives are once they enter our communities. Considering that the

Venezuelan illegal alien who brutally murdered Laken Riley in Athens earlier this year entered our country through Biden's parole program, every Georgian should be concerned by the President bringing more unvetted illegals into our state.

Clearly, securing our southern border is only half of the solution to the Biden Administration's intentional illegal invasion.

We desperately need a historic mass deportation effort to remove the millions of illegal aliens currently residing in our country — an operation that can only happen when President Trump is back in the White House.

Perricone... continued from Page 6A

We were so very grateful for the help.

However, Deputy Phillips' generosity did not stop there. He followed us to a nearby business to ensure that we were able to pump up that spare to a safe and drivable level. Thanks to Blairsville RV Sales for being so helpful with that part.

Amidst all that amplified discontent that you read about online and in the papers, there is still a greater good at play in Union County. We are appreciative of officers like Deputy Phillips. If you see him out and about, please shake his hand. He's in



Deputy Matthew Phillips it for all the right reasons. With highest regards, **George & Sharin Perricone** Union County Residents

Cummings... continued from Page 6A

neared the end of the sermon his demeanor would calm and he would become very serious. He wanted the congregation to know that it was time to make a decision that could affect their eternal destination.

Some people might envision the little preacher's manner of giving a sermon as uneducated or too emotional. I looked at it in a different way. To me, Curtis Taylor was a person that cared for his congregation and was excited about his

relationship with Jesus. After visiting with my Grandparents one summer I went home and the next Sunday in Church my pastor asked me if I had been attending church while visiting with my Grandparents. I told him yes and that I had particularly enjoyed hearing the sermons of Brother Taylor. I went on to explain how enthusiastic this man had been. I told about how he had bounced around the pulpit and how his face turned red as he preached. I said that he really seemed to enjoy preaching his sermons. I then asked our preacher why he didn't enjoy preaching the way Curtis Taylor did during his sermons.

Church attendance has always been important to my family. We went because we had always gone to church. You didn't ask questions, you just went. At one time Union Hill Church was just a brush arbor where singings were held. Sometime in the very early 1900s, some men in the local community got together and talked about the need for a church. Finally, Mr. Wynn said that he would donate the land for a building. Mr. Thomas stated that he would cut the timber for lumber. And my great-grandfather Lon Cummings said that he would saw the logs into lumber for the Church. After it was built, at least two congregations shared the building for services. Mr. Wynn served as a deacon for the church while Mr. Thomas led the singing and Lon Cummings played the pump organ. And now there are four generations of Cummings buried at that little church house in Alabama.

Williams... continued from Page 6A

have been fed by humans before. Bear relocation is usually not an effective control option. Bears that are relocated might be moved to an area that another bear has already claimed, leading to territory fights, or the bear may try to return to its home and be struck by a vehicle. Relocation is a last resort.

If you do encounter a bear in the open make yourself look big and wave your arms and shout while backing away slowly. Do not get between a mother bear and her cubs. If you are attacked fight back aggressively with anything you can get your hands on. Bears can be dangerous but know that there are no recorded fatalities in Georgia.

If you have questions about bears in our area contact your local Extension office for more information or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Fowler... continued from Page 6A

restoration and regeneration includes no crying or pain, mustn't that say something about your perspective of the present plagues of this fallen world? This is good news!

My Apache is living its best life, thanks to a new wiring harness. It cranks easily, runs like a sewing machine, and brightens the evening darkness. It is restored to what it ought to be.

Chamber... continued from Page 6A

contact Lindsey Townsend at Union General Hospital.

Friday, we had to reschedule our annual Shoot for the Stars golf tournament due to the weather. Based on the condition of the Golf Course and the forecast of more rain, we were not sure the course would be playable. There were also a number of people cleaning up after the storms, including the EMC. The tournament is rescheduled to June 14th at Butternut Creek Golf Course. If you have not signed up as a sponsor, contact Terri at the Chamber and help provide scholarships to local students.

Congrats to all those students that are going into the military and to those entering the workforce. Thank you for helping make Life Better in the U.S. and Blairsville.

Tarter... continued from Page 6A

muting home instead of staying home or close to home.

In my photolab, I all-too-often was asked to make an enlarged copy of a teen's last portrait - his drivers license - to put next to his casket after a drunk driving accident.

You can pass all kinds of laws restricting behavior, but keep in mind that the farther a person has to drive for alcohol the more frequently we will experience drunk driving.

It's not a matter of right and wrong, it just is.

J. Murray Tarter

S.A.F.E. Board Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Directors of S.A.F.E. (Support in Abusive Family Emergencies, Inc.) will be May 21 at 5:30 PM. Call 706-379-1901 for location.

Riley... continued from Page 6A

systems evolved with fire and continue to need the strategic application of fire that mimics this natural cycle. The plants and animals of the pine woods are accustomed to frequent fires and depend on these fires for their survival.

Fire also benefits many of the rare animal species in our state that are declining. Some of these declines are caused almost totally by fire exclusion. Frequent fires prevent the build-up of flammable fuels in the forest that set the stage for destructive wildfires when ignition does occur. "Prescribed burning means the controlled application of fire to existing vegetative fuels under specific environmental conditions and following appropriate precautionary measures, which causes the fire to be confined to a pre-determined area and accomplishes one or more planned land management objectives, or to mitigate catastrophic wildfires."

Georgia Prescribed Burning Act, 1992. Prescribed burning is carried out by experienced, trained, and certified practitioners on both public and private lands throughout Georgia. These professionals assess forest conditions, determine the type of fire needed, and then write a "prescription" for the application of fire. Great care is taken by prescribed fire managers to minimize any temporary inconveniences created by smoke. Smoke management plans for prescribed burns are designed so that smoke-sensitive areas like roads and residences are not negatively affected by the burn. Smoke from prescribed

fires does not contribute appreciably to air quality issues since the practice typically avoids times of stagnant summer air. However, uncontrolled wildfires usually occur during the summer when there is already a bad urban air quality problem. We can reduce the risk of wildfires and the resulting smoke or air quality problems with well-timed prescribed fires. No other tool can so effectively remove the hazardous buildup of woodland fuels and help maintain our forests.

Anyone interested in forest health and prescribed fires is welcome to register for the North Georgia Prescribed Fire Council meeting on June 13th. Check the Georgia Prescribed Fire website garxfire.com for more information on prescribed fire and registration information. This year the meeting will be at the Chattahoochee Technical College in Jasper on June 13th. The public is welcome. The registration fee is \$50 before May 26TH and \$75 after and Students are \$25 which covers breakfast and lunch and all of the meeting resources. Topics include effects on wildlife, water quality, smoke management, fire weather, where to get help for prescribed fire, air quality impacts, and the importance of prescribed fire in the #1 Forestry State in the nation, Georgia. Come out and join us in Jasper on the June 13th. 3.50 Cat, 1 Forestry CFEs and 4.5 B CLEs are offered.

For More information contact Chestatee Chattahoochee RC&D at www.info.ccrd@gmail.com.

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