

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Summer Safety Considerations

The warm temperatures are here and it's the time of year that everyone wants to get out and enjoy some summer adventures. Unfortunately, some of those adventures can lead to accidents and injuries. At the beginning of each summer, we provide some safety tips and considerations for summer activities to promote safety.

Swimming is a favorite summer activity and no matter if you are on the lake or sitting at the pool, it's a good idea to practice these swimming safety tips. Never leave young children alone when swimming; always have an adult present. Although we want to have fun, running and horse playing is dangerous around a pool so no running or swimming stunts.

Swimmers should also be aware of water depth and not dive in shallow water. Have safety equipment and flotation devices near the pool or swimming area for emergencies. If there is an incident, you want to be prepared. A CPR class could provide lifesaving information and skills to help if an incident occurs.

Another activity of the summer that may cause accidents is riding motorcycles and ATVs. These activities can be fun, but they can also be dangerous. Always wear your safety gear. Helmets are a must. Head injuries are a leading cause of death from motorcycle accidents. Use caution on rough and steep terrain. Never operate a motorcycle or ATV under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Hiking is another summer activity, but you must be prepared. Plan your hiking route and take a map, if possible, do not rely on your cell phone. Water and snacks are a must. Hikers should dress for the terrain with good hiking boots and proper clothing. Take extra clothing and a flashlight just in case it gets dark before you get back to your vehicle. Probably the most important is to never hike alone and know your limitations.

The summer sun can be dangerous no matter what activity you prefer. Keep cool by staying out of the sun as much as possible. Stay hydrated with water and avoid other drinks that may cause more harm than good. Wear sunscreen, skin cancer is real. Every moment that you expose your skin without sunscreen increases your risk. Even on partly cloudy days, sunburn is possible.

We all want to enjoy our summer. Keeping these few safety tips in mind may prevent summer accidents and allow us to have a

See Dyer, page 5A

**Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief**  
David Dyer



### A Blessed Day

Dear young lady at the front desk, I wish we'd had more time to talk.

You probably tell all the guests "have a blessed day" as they leave. I'm the guy who asked, "What do you mean by blessing?" I wondered about your beliefs. "Just that good things happen for you today," you said. I followed up, "And where do blessings come from?" It was early in the morning and you caught me off guard. "From the universe, right?" What a great conversation starter, if it really was a question. Here are a few thoughts to ponder.

For the universe to give a blessing, it must be able to think and act benevolently. Since the universe is material, does that mean the rocks of planets, burning gasses of stars, and gravitational forces in galaxies form a sentient being?

Since the universe had a beginning, wouldn't that suggest something or Someone caused it? Such a first cause would logically have to be outside of the universe since nothing causes itself. The Someone who caused a universe of beauty and order and gave you life is the source of blessing.

You defined blessing as "good things." Where does your sense of good and evil come from? Could a material world that just "is" produce beings that have a sense of what "ought" to be? Yet we do have a sense of what is good, righteous, and just. Once, C. S. Lewis doubted the existence of God because the world is so evil and unjust. "But how had I got this idea of just and unjust?" he wrote. "A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line." Lewis concluded that God created us with an idea of good because He is good.

That's what I would have said that morning. Remember what I did say? "Jesus is the source of our blessings." I think this sums it up even better: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matt. 5:6).

Sincerely, A Friend. P.S. Have a blessed day!

**All Things New**  
Wayne Fowler



### Commissioner's Questions

**Q. I would like an opportunity to speak with you. How do I manage this?**

A. You may always call my office at 706-439-6000; send an email to me at commissioner@uniongov.com, and if you see me at the Farmer's Market, Church, or just out in the community, you can let me know you need some of my time.

**Q. I called your office, and it seems like it took a while for you to return my call. Is this a normal response time?**

A. As I stated above you may reach me via several different outlets, and sometimes it can be hard for me to get back in touch with someone on what they consider to be a timely basis. The reason for this is I do always have a lot of messages that I have to go through and prioritize. My staff will try to help when possible, so sometimes it can be a couple of weeks or even longer before I can return a call or message. If your concern needs a quicker response, please let my staff know and I will make every effort to get with you sooner.

**Q. The last time I called your office to speak with you, the person answering the phone helped direct me to someone else that answered my question. Is this a normal practice?**

A. I am very fortunate to have a wonderful staff! A few years ago I could keep all of my correspondence returned within the week. Now it is impossible for me to maintain that goal as much as I would like to. With one factor being there are so many different mediums available to reach me and leave messages, my message count has probably quadrupled to what it was years ago. So, yes, I count on my staff more than I did in the past to help me find the answers you need to questions. If you ever call my office do not hesitate to let them know exactly what you need; most times they can help you or let me know what it is you need, so that we may facilitate your request sooner.

**Q. Well I have called your office and didn't get the information I needed, so what do I do now? I would really like to speak with you.**

A. That is exactly what you need to tell the person that answers your call, and they will get me the information so I may return your call sooner. I do rely on my staff as I mentioned above.

See Paris, page 5A

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**  
Lamar Paris



### Letters to the Editor

#### Surrendering U.S. Sovereignty

Dear Editor,

The Biden Administration is undertaking the deliberate surrender of our national sovereignty to the World Health Organization (WHO).

A meeting is scheduled in late May of the WHO Assembly in Geneva whereby U.S.-proposed amendments will be considered for approval that would alter our own existing International Health Regulations Treaty.

The Biden administration's amendments, along with those from several other countries, will be combined to create a new global pandemic treaty. That treaty is set to be adopted in Geneva at the World Health Assembly.

The amendments will give the WHO director general the unilateral power to declare a health emergency based on broad criteria that would impose lockdowns, vaccine mandates and other measures.

These amendments would make the WHO director general the ultimate authority over what is a "public health emergency" of international concern and dictate how our government and others would respond to it.

What is problematic is the term "public health emergency." This could include not only a viral pandemic, but also a rise in crime rates, climate change, or any other issue the WHO defines as "public health."

Such a surrender of "public health" decisions to an international body led by a Chinese-compromised leader is most unacceptable under any circumstance.

It is especially true given the WHO's appalling record of subordinating sound public health policies to the demands of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that was evident in the COVID-19 pandemic. This is an imminent and appalling surrender of our national sovereignty.

Tim Groza

#### Welcome Death

Dear Editor,

Not many folks want to talk about dying, especially how we will die when life is over here, but the word of God is very clear on the subject of death. It is not the end of life, but the beginning of a new life if you are a child of God.

The book of Psalm 23:4 says: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you Lord are with me. Folks, this is a promise that God will be with us instantly the moment we close our eyes here and open them in heaven forevermore.

The awareness of our own mortality often comes with sickness, trials and hardship, but the Lord Jesus our Protector can lead us through these dark and difficult valleys to eternal life with Him.

There is no need to fear death's power. Death and the grave were defeated on the Cross. Christ's death fulfilled the penalty of sin, thus by placing our trust in Christ, we can be free from Satan's evil grasp.

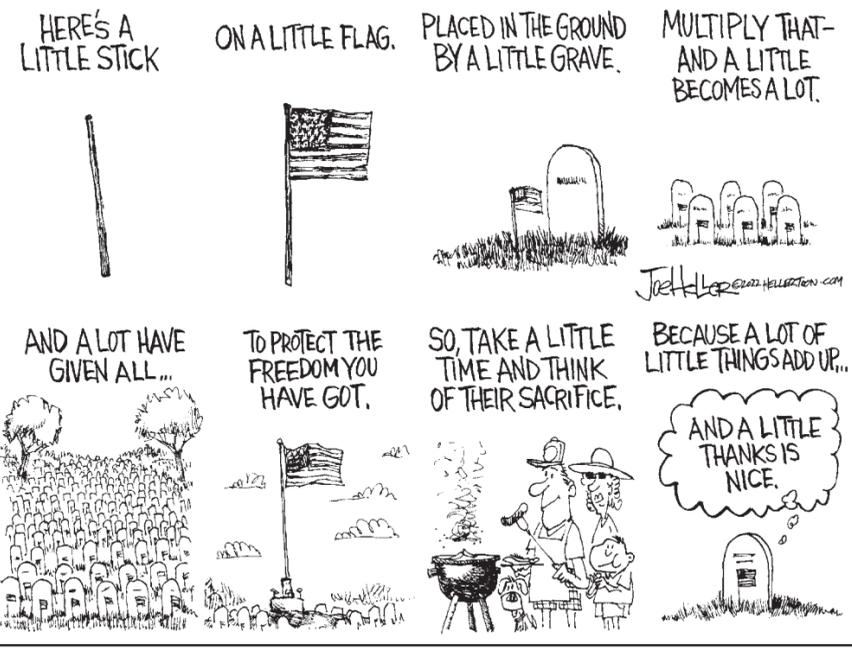
God promises the crown of life to believers who persevere under trials which will result in the ultimate enjoyment of life in God's kingdom. Death is yet another servant of God that ushers us into the very presence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and there shall we be for all eternity.

Embrace death as the only pathway that can lead God's people into His waiting arms. Death has no sting for those who are God's chosen ones.

Whether we tarry here for a while or God calls us home, we have the victory in Jesus to assure about for all eternity with the One who made it possible for us who trust in God when life begins anew in glory.

This promise is only for those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Frank F. Combs



### "Take Five"

#### How to comply with Georgia's new Outdoor Burning Laws!

We have preached about always get a permit to burn anything even a small pile of leaves in your yard.

This is protection for you in case disaster strikes and the fire escapes and burns things it is not supposed to. It also gives emergency dispatchers information on where legal burns are taking place so they don't dispatch fire trucks unnecessarily to put out your controlled fire.

Now there is a new law on the books in Georgia as of July 1 that removes the requirement for a permit for small piles of debris, but it puts more responsibility on you to do things to comply with this new law to make the burn safer. If the fire gets out and help is dispatched and you are not in compliance with the law, then fines may be imposed to pay for the suppression costs, such as bulldozers, firefighters, engines, and you don't want to know what a helicopter or air tanker costs!

So do what the law requires and you should be covered in case your fire escapes onto your neighbors property. You can learn about Georgia's revised outdoor burning regulations and how to "Take Five" before burning; providing an easy five-point "S-S-T-A-R," to visually remember your responsibilities as burners.

Go to [www.gatrees.org](http://www.gatrees.org) and read the 5 points you need to take to comply. You can also check out this link and see our own Mark Wiles (aka Silver Smokey 2022) explaining all about it. #gatrees #wildfireprevention #takefive #georgialaws #forestry [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

As of July 1, 2021, changes go into effect regarding the legal responsibilities of Georgia landowners burning outdoor yard debris. Under Senate Bill 119, GA code section 12-6-90 was changed to eliminate the need to notify the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) by the person, firm, corporation, or association who intends to burn hand-piled natural vegetation/yard debris. Any local burning ordinances are applicable and may be more restrictive than state law. In addition, restrictions on burning in 54 northern Georgia counties under the Environmental Protection Division summer burn ban from May 1-September 30 continue to be in effect. Changes to 12-6-90 include specific requirements of those intending to burn outdoors.

A Georgia Forestry Commission com- See Riley, page 5A

**RC&D Executive Director**



Frank Riley

### Experiences at Church

Church and events surrounding the church have always been an integral part of my life. And I have learned much from those experiences. A few that come to mind follow this paragraph.

Aunt June had a younger sister about my age whom I played with as a child. As we grew older, Debbie became a Tomboy of the highest caliber. She loved riding those Honda Trail 90's and could whip most of my male friends. Even as a young girl, upon noticing a problem, she did her best to correct that problem. Union Hill Congregational Church, a little country church in Trapptown, was where our family has worshipped for more than a century. Five generations of my family are laid to rest in that little cemetery. Everyone in the church is connected through family or close friendship.

As you walked into the old church, the old tongue and groove pine planking would creak and moan as if in pain. During the summertime, the windows would be opened and the old black ceiling fans would draw in cool air from outside of the building. The old wooden benches lacked cushioning, insuring that very few people would fall asleep during the sermons of the preacher. At the front of the small sanctuary an old upright piano was placed in the corner of the stage on the preacher's right side. The "Amen corner" was located on his left consisting of two pews where the Deacons sat during services.

After Sunday School everyone gathered in the pews of the sanctuary for the worship service. A few good singers would sing a special or two, and then the congregation would sing 8-10 good old gospel songs. These included "Amazing Grace" and "Let Us Have A Little Talk With Jesus." After these songs, the "Song Leader" would ask the young kids to come up and lead the congregation in a song or two of their choosing.

This particular Sunday, Mr. McMurray asked the young'uns to come up to the stage. Debbie and I must have been about 5 or 6 years old. She walked up to the stage, and the kids began to sing "Jesus Loves Me." Debbie soon noticed that Mr. McMurray's pants were unzipped and his shirt tail was sticking out of his fly. So, to correct this problem, she reached toward his waist and tried to grab his zipper. The song leader did his best to maintain his dignity while trying to keep time with his right hand, holding the songbook with his left hand and gently pushing this young girl away with his leg. The girl's mother, L. G., was horrified. My Aunt June was stunned. Everyone else was trying not to laugh while all the teenagers were cracking up. Mr.

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**Around The Farm**



Mickey Cummings

### Agriculture Laws

Today I want to talk about some new laws regarding agriculture in Georgia. These laws either came out this year or last year. The purpose of me discussing these laws is to make people aware of them. The purpose is not to give anyone legal advice or to state whether I agree or disagree. I just want people to be aware of some of the legislation that has passed into law and the reasoning behind why it was passed.

One bill that was signed into law last year is regarding bee removal from a structure. Basically, this law requires individuals who remove honeybees that are ensconced in a structure to be licensed. The licensing is overseen by the Georgia Department of Agriculture. If the honeybees are free hanging on a tree or on the side of a building you do not need a license to remove them. If they are inside a wall or a cavity inside the structure, then a license is required. In the past people would call a local beekeeper to remove the colony. However, there have been situations where extensive damage has been done to homes, because removal was not done properly or ethically. The goal of the licensing process is to eliminate that issue. Currently, neighboring states don't have laws like Georgia does regarding honeybee removal. However, it is expected that within the next few years they will and some reciprocity of licensing will be established. Right now, we are in an awkward stage because this has been signed into law, but there are very few licensed honeybee removers in the state. Georgia Department of Agriculture is working to get people licensed, so we are in a grace period. The law can be found in Chapter 620-9 of Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia. This law only applies to honeybees. It does not apply to other species of bees, wasps, hornets, or yellowjackets.

A law that was passed this year is regarding elementary agriculture education. Middle and high school students can take agriculture classes already. Starting this fall any local board of education can begin to offer agricultural classes if they so choose. Elementary agriculture classes and teachers would be funded by the local board of education. There was a pilot program for elementary agriculture education that started in 2018 which had 27 schools participate. The goal of elementary agriculture education is to increase agriculture literacy so that people understand where their food comes from. This was House Bill 1303.

The last bit of legislative work that I would like to talk about is what people call the

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**Blairsville - Union County Chamber**  
President



Steve Rowe

**Watching and Working**  
Jacob Williams



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so don't get frustrated if they ask you questions. They are just trying to help.

**Q. Do you get frustrated with all of the emails, phone calls, Facebook messages, regular mail and in person questions?**

A. To be honest, no I don't. I truly love being the Commissioner and enjoy being able to interact with the citizens of Union County. It is rather unfortunate that I can't always please everyone but that is a result of human nature not for lack of trying on my part. The best part of my job is being able to listen to everyone and find out the needs in our county, and then trying to find a solution.

This Summer, I would

like for everyone to think about your neighbor. If you have an elderly, sick or widowed neighbor please check on them during the summer. Life has a way of moving at a very fast pace and sometimes we forget about the needy among us. Sometimes a person may need just a smile, kind word or a simple handshake, but sometimes a need may go deeper and you might find a neighbor needing food or assistance of some kind. During the summer the temperatures can get hot so if you would take time to check on your neighbor, I am sure they would certainly appreciate it. Thank you for being one of the best communities in the country. We are blessed to live in this beautiful county.

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munication campaign is informing landowners of these requirements in various media and is built on an acronym that emphasizes legal burning responsibilities. It advises burners to carefully plan their burn by remembering to "Take Five," and follow an easy to remember; "S-S-T-A-R" formula: S - Space - 25+ feet between fire and woodlands; S - Space 50+ feet between fire and structures; T - Time - sunrise to sunset; A - Attendance - Person responsible on-site until the fire is extinguished; R - Reasonable precautions - Tools/measures in place to prevent escaped fire.

Beginning May 1st and ending September 30th, EPD's Open Burning Ban will be enforced in 54 Georgia counties. The Open Burning Ban prohibits citizens and businesses from burning yard and land-clearing debris. This rule is in addition to the year-round state ban on the burning of household garbage. Open burn rules in Georgia don't restrict you from never making a fire outdoors.

There are several legal ways to burn outdoors; thirteen ways in fact. These are types of legal burn activities as outlined by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division: 1. Reduction of leaves

on premises, 2. Agricultural procedures for production or harvesting of crops (if land tract is 5 acres or less), 3. Burning vegetative material for agricultural operations (if land tract is greater than 5 acres), 4. Prescribed burning, 5. Recreational purposes and cooking, 6. Fire-fighting training, 7. Acquired structure burns, 8. Vegetative debris from storms, 9. Weed abatement, disease, and pest prevention, 10. Open flame devices, 11. Land clearing, construction, and right-of-way maintenance, 12. Disposal of packaging materials for explosives, and 13. Land clearing with an air curtain destructor. And though these are legal ways to burn in Georgia, some of these types of burning require permits or special equipment.

Burning man-made materials like tires, plastics, lumber, or household garbage is never legal in the state of Georgia.

For more information on burning in Georgia or if you are in doubt about what you are allowed to burn, contact your local Georgia Forestry Commission office or go to [www.gatrees.org](http://www.gatrees.org) or check us out ChestChatt RC&D on Facebook at Chestatee Chattahoochee RC&D.

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Freedom to Farm bill. This was House Bill 1150. All 50 states have some form of a freedom to farm bill or right to farm bill. The purpose of these bills is to protect farmers from nuisance lawsuits of smells, noises, or other legal practices related to farming. Georgia has had a freedom to farm law, but this new law strengthens it. One of the big changes that this law presents is that lawsuits must be brought by individuals who live adjacent to the farm. The

other change is that the lawsuit must be brought within two years of the act that it is about. The reason for the changes to Georgia's right to farm bill was to protect farmers from nuisance lawsuits. An example is lawsuits that shut down a hog operation in North Carolina in 2020.

If you would like to discuss these bills more, contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

## Chamber... continued from Page 4A

for the silent auction contact Ashley today to find out how you can help.

And, while you have Ashley on the phone be sure and ask how you can get your Blairsville Ultimate Adventure Raffle ticket. The tickets are \$10 each to win prizes valued at over \$4,700. Check out our

website for more information. Proceeds help to fund the July 4th Fireworks display.

Don't forget to check out the Arts, Craft & Music Festival this weekend in Downtown Blairsville and stay around for the Parade!

Remember, Life is Better in Blairsville!

## Cummings... continued from Page 4A

McMurray was very professional. However, his right hand which was keeping time sped up and instead of being in 1/4 time the song was played in 3/4 time or maybe even faster. The whole situation is now a legend at Union Hill Church. Some even think it is not true. But, I was there.

An even earlier memory happened when I was 2 1/2. It was March in 1960 and we were visiting from up North. Actually, Mom and I had come home so my sister could be born. Mom knew the Doctor in Haleyville well and wanted him for her birth of my sister. We were sitting in Sunday morning service and the Preacher walked to the pulpit to begin his sermon. I was riled because I was not allowed to sit with my Papa. As scripture began to be read I found my chance. I left the pew in a hurry and ran to the "Amen Corner" where he was sitting. I figured I was safe there with him. I tried my best to remain still and quiet. And I was for maybe a minute. I eased to the end of the pew and Papa looked at me, so, I grabbed a hymnal and pretended to look at it. I made another break when he looked away. I dove under the pew and popped up in front and began playing hide and seek with the Deacons.

They were all laughing and I was having a good time until I noticed my Mom. She was coming for me, so I made a dash for the preacher. Soon the whole audience in the church was laughing, even the preacher, and I was the center of attention. Can you imagine what my Mom was thinking and feeling? Remember, she was 8 1/2 months pregnant and chasing this little kid across the stage at our little country church. After another mad dash around the stage, she grabbed my collar. I cannot remember what happened. All she'll say is that I never acted up in church again. And it was a long time before I was allowed to sit with my Papa.

Now, there are some which would think these stories irreverent. However, I cherish them because they remind me of a much simpler time in my life. I wish the whole country could take a trip down my memory lane to that little country church in Trapptown, Alabama, to listen to some good

## Dyer...

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great time enjoying the summer adventures with our friends and family.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

## Your Patriot Reflection



### Constitution as a Protection for the People

There were many complex questions addressed at the Constitutional Congress by our Founding Fathers. But there was one tantalizing question which no political scientist of any age had yet been able to answer with complete satisfaction. The question? "How can you have an efficient government but still protect the freedom and unalienable rights of the people?" From experience, Alexander Hamilton wrote: "For it is truth, which the experience of all ages has attested, that the people are commonly most in danger when the means of injuring their rights are in the hands of those toward whom they entertain the least suspicion."

What finally evolved from their discussions was government based on "We The People." Thomas Jefferson said it best, and most vehemently: "In questions of power, then, let no more be said of confidence in man, BUT BIND HIM DOWN FROM MISCHIEF BY THE CHAINS OF THE CONSTITUTION!"

In a day and time when many say it is time to move away from an antiquated Constitution we must ask ourselves what their true motivation is for our country. Proven for 230 years as a deterrent to potential tyrants and those who seek absolute power, we must solidly stand in defense of our Constitution.

A Patriot Reflection is presented weekly by [www.joshuawarriors.org](http://www.joshuawarriors.org).

old gospel singing and preaching. Who knows, there might be a laugh at the antics of a little boy.

The next Lecture at the Old Courthouse will be held on June 6 at 6 p.m. Our speakers are Sheldon Henderson and Bruce Roberts. They will speak about some old historic sites in our area, including some old home places, Craytonia (an old abandoned community close to Skeenah Gap) and some old bowl quarries left over from Native American times.