

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Fire Adapted Communities

The goal of all our wildfire work, programs, and projects is to make all of you safer from wildfire in your communities, homes, and even your and your family's lives. All the programs that we facilitate, such as Firewise, Ready-Set-Go, CWPP, and others are building blocks for the overall goal of making a community Fire Adapted (FAC). In other words, everybody knows what their part is to help protect the community in the face of a potential disaster.

Wildfires do not stop at property boundaries. More than 70,000 communities and 44 million homes are at risk from wildfire in the wildland urban interface (WUI) - where vegetative fuels and the built environment meet. Over the last ten years, more than 35,000 structures were destroyed by wildfires - an average of 3,500 a year. Pre-fire risk reduction, on a variety of fronts, can help communities adapt to wildfire. Fire adaptation means communities take mitigation actions so they can live with wildfire without harm and without extensive wildfire suppression efforts.

The U.S. Forest Service developed, supports, and promotes community fire adaptation. A key component of community fire adaptation is that there is not one silver bullet that reduces risk; there are many tools that, when used together and strategically, reduce risk. And it is not the responsibility of one agency or group to mitigate; it is the responsibility of everyone who lives and works in the community. Fire adaptation happens when local multi-jurisdictional stakeholders work together to identify risk, mitigate it, and maintain the work over time. Fire adaptation is not a recognition program, and it is not a checklist. A community does not achieve "fire adapted community" status or certification because the work to reduce wildfire risk never ends.

Foundational tools of fire adaptation includes: A local multi-jurisdictional mitigation group to share risk reduction responsibility in the community. This core group teaches, mentors, and develops trusted relationships with residents and other stakeholders to foster on-the-ground mitigation.

Research indicates face-to-face communications with trusted community leaders is the best way to share information about mitigation and to move residents to do mitigation work on the

See Riley, page 5A

**RC&D
Executive
Director**

Frank
Riley



Rebuke the Winds

Fear is part of the human experience. It motivates us to act in ways that in hindsight we wish we hadn't. It's even worse if it reveals something important is lacking.

The word "fear" appears almost 400 times in the Bible, describing a range of human situations. In one story, we see a reaction to astrophobia (fear of storms). Late one evening, some men were in a small boat. Jesus was with them, asleep. A great storm arose over the sea and they woke him. "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!" they cried. He admonished, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" This was early in his earthly ministry and people were still learning about Him. He did rebuke the winds that night. "What kind of man is this?" they marveled (Matt. 8:24-27).

Fear moves in when faith is lacking. Many human fears, regardless of their fancy phobia words, are grounded in the fear of the unknown. Those men didn't know how bad the storm would become. They didn't know their chosen role in revealing God's plan in that moment. They didn't know how much Jesus loved them even amidst hardship. They didn't know God the Son was in the boat with them. He rebuked the winds that night because He meant for them to know Him and learn to trust Him.

The most powerful antidote to fear is knowing the love of God. "God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us... There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:16-18). Anything else is an inferior antidote to fear. C. S. Lewis wrote, "It is very desirable that we should all advance to that perfection of love in which we shall fear no longer; but it is very undesirable, until we have reached that stage, that we should allow any inferior agent to cast out our fear." Those inferior agents may make fears, but they don't rebuke them.

Three years later, those men knew much about Jesus' purpose and love. Under threat of imprisonment and death for telling about Jesus they declared to the authorities, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Faith moved by love made them fearless.

If the God of the universe can reconcile you to Himself by

See Fowler, page 5A

**All Things
New**

Wayne
Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Part 1 of 2

Q. When will we receive our property tax bills?

A. The bills should be mailed out sometime this Fall and the property taxes will be due December 20, 2021.

Q. How is my property value determined for property tax purposes?

A. Your property tax is a tax based upon the value of your property, both real and personal. Real property is defined as land and generally anything that is erected, growing, or affixed to the land. Personal property is boats, airplanes, business inventory, and any equipment, furniture, and fixtures needed to run a business.

Property taxes are charged against the owner of record, of the property on January 1st, and against the property itself if the owner is not known.

The Tax Assessor's Office is tasked with establishing the fair market value of the taxable real and personal properties in Union County. Fair market value means "the amount a knowledgeable buyer would pay for the property and a willing seller would accept for the property at an arm's length, bona fide sale."

Q. So how does the Tax Assessor's Office determine fair market value?

A. The Board of Assessors does not create property values. Assessors and appraisers merely interpret what is happening in the marketplace. The appraised value is simply the estimate of what the property is worth.

The assessors use standard approaches in setting the value on all real and personal property. There are three approaches to value:

Cost Approach: The cost approach uses actual replacement cost of the building, less general depreciation, plus the value of the land.

Market Approach: The market approach involves analyzing sales of similar properties to predict the likely selling price of unsold properties.

Income Approach: The income approach is used for income-producing properties. It involves capitalizing the net income to ar-

**Q & A
from Union
County
Commissioner**

Lamar
Paris



See Paris, page 5A

For a Common Goal

Well, Memorial Day is in the bag, and I thank everyone who helped make this year's ceremony, as meager as it was during my first year with it, what I consider a success. Just consider all the elements that had to come together to make that happen. Many moving parts were happening all at once.

When I flew as a crew chief for general staff in Europe and we would do the annual fall reforgers, I got to see the exact same thing. Many separate moving parts working together for a common goal. Often, each of the moving parts doesn't know what the others are doing; it's only the eye in the sky that can put it all together.

So, on to the next event, that'll be the Fourth of July, look for me with the Girl Scouts at First United Methodist Church. Our primary focus will be selling ice cream as a fundraiser for the Girl Scouts. However, during the course of the evening the Girl Scouts will be doing a flag

See Walters-Taylor, page 5A

**Military
Musings**

Janice
Walters-
Taylor



"If the state needs money, why don't they just tax every bad thing politicians say about their opponents?"

Letters to the Editor

Regarding "UDSDs"

Dear Editor,
In response to the recent letter regarding the speed limit at GA 515 and K Creek Road, we totally agree with his UDSD (Unaware, Distracted, Stupid Driver) analogy. To emphasize it, we must include those folks intent on talking on their cellphone and driving with one hand, and some smoking or eating, too.

But, I would also like to comment on the "Left Turn on Yellow Arrow" that has come about in the last few years. This is a horrendous point of confusion, especially for those elderly drivers in our community. I was witness to an elderly lady in a very large Town Car stuck in the intersection of 515 and Murphy Hwy at high noon. With a Yellow Arrow and cars coming from all directions, she could not move. I'm sure none of us could imagine how frightened she was until all traffic stopped and she could move on. Traffic is busy enough in our town without adding question and chance to the game.

Left turns on yellow, right turns with yield, cellphone not on speaker, and speed limits that mean nothing... And let's not forget, failure to remember what that turn signal lever is for. Can't Fix Stupid (CFS) should be listed along with UDSD

Deborah Smith

Lake Nottely Improvement Association

Dear Editor,
A six-month, five-point plan was approved at the May 10 Lake Nottely Improvement Association's Board Meeting and then implemented on June 5 at a called meeting at Poteete Creek Pavilion. Committees, chairmen and volunteers will work together to complete their task by early summer. The lake debris problem is scheduled to be completed by the winter rain season.

The five areas of current concern are: 1) lake debris 2) water quality 3) lake safety 4) permit adherence and 5) derelict docks.

Water quality has been an LNIA focus for years, and we intend to continue that successful program. To help facilitate this, we need more people to help with H2O testing.

The Union County Permit Department's Randy Day has pledged his assistance and offered his expertise. LNIA is forming a partnership with the Permit Department concerning shoreline and land disturbance education for the public.

We are also planning to be schooled by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and Department of Natural Resources to assist them in their duties concerning safety and rules on the lake.

The TVA has very strict rules concerning

See Varian, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

A Letter to America

Dear Editor,
Americans are frogs in the pot of water being brought to the boil and cooked. We ignore incremental chunks of our freedoms being chiseled away by Marxists determining our social mores.

A co-founder of Black Lives Matter is a self-avowed Marxist and fan of Mao.

Left-wing Antifa is so anti-fascist they have, themselves, become the official Brown Shirts as they burn, riot, loot, pillage, and harm Americans for fun.

A trans-sexual sitting as Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services appears to favor puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones for minors. School curriculums target sexualizing our children.

Some 800,000 children go missing annually in America (FBI); almost 8 million worldwide. You need to ask what happens to our most precious resource. Now. Not asking allows child sex traffickers to flourish; the result, a horror beyond the scope of this article.

We go blithely about our business, entrusting our country, on all levels, to politicians. More than a few are child molesters and traffickers, from both political parties. Arrested.

See Guthrie, page 5A

Just a Coincidence?

Dear Editor,
While searching for a parking space in a crowded lot the first eight cars I passed had northern tags and several had Biden/Harris bumper stickers. I thought, what a coincidence seeing eight out-of-state tags in a row. After entering the store I ran into two of the eight owners. Another coincidence! "What brings you to the South?" I asked. "Our corrupt state government" was the instant response.

Comparing Obama, Trump, and Biden's highest election results finds Obama with 69 million votes, Trump with 74 million and Biden with 81 million. Maximum counties won, Obama 873, Trump 2497, and Biden 477. Bellwether counties Obama 18/19 Trump 18/19 Biden 1/19. Obama and Trump both won house seats and Florida, Ohio and Iowa, while Biden lost house seats and all three key states. Just a coincidence, the corrupt media reports! Amazingly, election night, at the precise second with Trump winning handily, six key states experienced counting problems and vote totals reversed with Biden being elected. So, is life a series of coincidences?

Praxeological studies prove people are imperfect. So who among us qualifies to govern? What laws can we live by to allow a nation to flourish? We live in a world of scarcity (food in

See Huber, page 5A

Skinny Dipping

The Baker girls were supposed to stay away from the upper swimming hole on Little Bear Creek. The water was deep and Dad Baker was afraid the girls might drown. Besides that, it was early spring and the water was still cool. As the young girls rambled through the woods around the Gray Rocks area, they noticed the clear cool water. It was hotter than normal for early spring and the girls wondered what the water might feel like on that spring day in 1932. The girls sat down for a rest and began rationalizing the merits of taking a dip in the inviting water.

The girls knew their father, Dad Baker, would spank them for swimming in the upper hole of the stream. However, the water was cool and the girls knew their brothers used this swimming hole frequently. My grandmother Delphia and her sister Lucille were strong-willed and knew they could do anything their brothers could do. They also knew Dad was hard at work in the logging woods and would never find out about their escapade. So, the girls came out of their clothes and laid them high on the rock overlooking the creek. They played and swam in the water for 40 minutes or more, never giving another thought to the consequences of their actions.

The girls were unaware of the presence of their older brothers hiding in the bushes. Mack and Rufus had secretly followed the girls through the woods to the swimming hole. While the girls swam their brothers stole away with their clothing. Mack and Rufus slipped back into their home and placed their sisters' clothes on their beds and then left the house to explore the woods around the Gray Rock area.

Delphia and Lucille left the water refreshed and proud of themselves for getting away with a dip in the creek. However, they were soon paralyzed with fear as they reached the top of the rocks and found their clothing gone. The girls were petrified. Their clothes were missing, and the Baker house was a mile from the upper swimming hole on Little Bear Creek. The sisters had only one choice. They slipped back through the woods to their house. Fortunately, the woods provided them with adequate cover until they reached the Baker Farm. However, the final 300 yards were across a cotton and corn field.

They stopped short of the house to make sure their father was not home. They called out to their mother, "Mommy, please bring us some clothes to put on." Mommy Baker was somewhat confused by their request. But she quietly walked to the girls with the clothing she had found on their beds.

See Cummings, page 5A

**Around
The Farm**

Mickey
Cummings



Watering Plants

As you may have noticed, the weather lately has been rather dry. All plants, but especially annuals (such as vegetables) and freshly planted perennials, are affected by this drier trend, because their root systems are not yet large enough to support the plant and do not yet efficiently collect water from surrounding soils. There is a fine balance to be observed when irrigating plants, though: Too much water will wash nutrients away from young roots and may cause rot, while too little or shallow watering will either allow the plant to dehydrate or bring the roots too close to the hot surface of the soil.

In general, vegetable plants would rather have more thorough and less frequent watering. When the entire topsoil layer is saturated at least twice a week, the roots of a vegetable plant will tend to grow downward, towards the damper and cooler soil beneath them. Not only will the root system collect water more efficiently, it will also draw the roots away from the drier and hotter surface of the soil. This promotes a healthier plant growth pattern, reducing the need for external watering when there is a rain and lowering the chances of the root system being attacked by unwanted fungi.

In the case of other young transplants, such as fruit trees, bushes and shrubs, flowering perennials and other ornamental plants, the amount of water will usually vary due to the soil it was planted in, the size of the original root ball and plant, and the type of plant being watered. For example, a young apple tree from a 3-gallon pot transplanted in clay-based soil will require less frequent watering than a group of raspberry starts in the same soil, due to the higher amount of water loss through the leaves (transpiration) in the raspberry starts. It is always best to check the sticker or plant tag that came with the plant for advice first, but as a general rule of thumb, water trees and ornamental shrubs enough to keep the soil 4 to 6" around the root ball (including below it) moist, but not soggy, every other day that it does not rain. Continue this until they are established. For starts such as blueberries, raspberry and blackberries, hydrangeas, and vining flowers and fruits (like clematis), water 4-6" around the root ball every day it does not rain until they are established in the soil.

Common sense applies in this process as well: if the soil around the plant is still about as moist as it should be at day 2, then hold off on watering until it begins to dry again. A good "quick-n-dirty" test for soil moisture is to grab a handful, squeeze it in your hand, and let go.

See Williams, page 5A

**UGA
extension**

Watching
and Working

Jacob
Williams



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Website: www.nganews.com • Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com • Mail: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

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Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - One Year \$40. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$5. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 17, 1988, at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

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Paris... continued from Page 4A

arrive at a probable selling price for the property.

Q. If I own a \$100,000 home, how much will my property taxes be in Union County?

A. For simplicity, we will assume there are no exemptions on this property. A \$100,000 home would be assessed at 40% of the assessed value, which means it would be assessed and you pay taxes on only \$40,000. You take the assessed value and multiply it by the mil rate to determine the taxes on this example.

\$100,000 assessed value of the home x 40% of the assessed value = \$40,000 amount you pay taxes on

\$40,000 amount you pay taxes on x .007178 county mil rate of 2020 = \$287.52 Total due for county taxes

\$40,000 amount you pay taxes on x .011740 school mil rate of 2020 = \$469.60 Total due for school taxes

\$287.52 Total due for county taxes + \$469.60 Total due for school taxes = \$757.12 Total tax bill

Q. Are there other factors beside the mil rate that impact property taxes?

A. Yes, there are many. Some counties have different

services that are more costly than other counties. Union County has more miles of county roads than many counties and that obviously cost more to maintain.

Union County also has over 50 % of our county owned by the federal government, and none of that property can be taxed, where most counties collect taxes on most of the land in the county.

In Union County, we have a budget of nearly \$1 million dollars just for our paid fire department while most rural counties do not even have a paid full-time fire department. We feel the safety of the public is worth the cost since our Fire Department not only goes on fire calls, but assists on medical calls, car accidents, search and rescue, and as a citizen, you are guaranteed a response in the event of an emergency. They also work closely with GEMA and FEMA regarding emergency management in the county and are continuously training. So when you look at all factors available to you, it is obvious that Union County government does, in fact, have a very low property tax rate while providing a very high level of service to you, the public.

Riley... continued from Page 4A

ground. A community wildfire protection plan (CWPP) which identifies where wildfire risk exists, outlines ways to reduce or mitigate that risk, and helps do the risk reduction work on the ground. It is not enough to have a CWPP, it must be updated and implemented. The risk reduction tasks must be accomplished and maintained. Read: Best Management Practices for Creating Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Hazardous fuels treatment inside and around the community on public and private lands. This means the landscape can experience wildfire (small and manageable wildfires or prescribed burns) and its benefits without the threat of catastrophic wildfire. In addition, a fuel buffer around a community and reduced fuels inside the community keep wildfire at bay and provide safe zones for residents and firefighters alike.

Fuel reduction projects often involve smoke, so it is important residents understand the value of fuel treatments and tolerate the temporary inconvenience of smoke that could reduce the long-term risk of wildfire. More information at USFS Prescribed Fire and The Fire Learning Network.

A volunteer or career fire department or fire protection association plays a big role in reducing risk from wildfire and being ready to respond should a wildfire occur. Research shows that firefighters are a local trusted authority in delivering the mitigation message and in helping stakeholders do mitigation. Fire departments are also often the local hero in coalescing local stakeholders in wildfire risk reduction actions on the ground. Fire departments and Sheriffs are critical

to evacuation training, designation of safe zones and evacuation routes, and promotion of wildfire prevention messaging. More information at Ready, Set, Go!

Defensible space around structures means flammable fuels like leaf piles, unmown dry grass, lawnmowers and gas, lawn furniture, propane tanks and wood piles, leaves and needles in the gutters and on the roof, and flammable trees too near the home are removed or stored in more appropriate places. This defensible space provides a fuel buffer for the structure and a place for firefighters to do structure protection if the home is defensible. More information at Firewise and Living with Wildfire.

Resilient structures are less susceptible to ignition from embers – the primary cause of structure loss. A resilient structure, for instance, is constructed of less flammable materials, has a class “A” roof (not a cedar shake roof or siding), has metal screen over eave vents, and under decks. More information at Wildfire Disaster Safety Wildland urban interface codes and ordinances can define best practices for construction and location of new development in a WUI community and outline resilient materials for developments. For instance, some communities do not allow cedar shake roofs, siding, or fencing in high-risk areas. Others restrict new developments in high-risk wildfire risk areas where it is difficult to protect structures at risk.

Our wildfire FAC Net team works to provide the citizens with information and tools to become Fire Adapted and safer from Wildfire. The community you can help save might be yours.

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

Meeks Park, the Sports Center and pickleball courts), so what is next? Stan Gunter assumed the office as Georgia House of Representatives District 8 this January 2021 and was recently named 2021 Freshman Legislator of the Year at the spring Government Affairs Council meeting of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce.

Stan serves on the House Appropriations Committee, the House Economic Development and Tourism Committee and is Vice Chair of the House Judiciary Committee. Space will be limited so call the Chamber to

reserve you seat today!

The July 4th fireworks display promises to be bigger and better than ever. You do not want to miss out on our “Backyard Party Pack,” valued at over \$2,200. Go to the Chamber’s Facebook page or website to get a list of items included in the package and to find out how you can purchase your tickets.

Check out the Chamber’s website to see the Community Calendar and find what’s new with your favorite local businesses and restaurants. Remember, it’s always better in Blairsville!

Huber... continued from Page 4A

(particular).

While most of the world lives with famine, Americans throw more food in the dumpster than starving nations could consume. Why are the governments of many countries immiserating, with millions of immigrants heading for the borders of America? Could it be coincidence? Are America’s Business Men, Scientists, Inventors, etc. smarter than the

rest of the world, or just another coincidence, or could it be that America was founded on “In God We Trust”?

The answer can be found in the Gospel of John Chapter 6 verses 5 through 14 and in verse 35: “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

Ed Huber

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

The girls were surprised to see the same clothes they had left on the rocks when they went swimming. Mommy Baker was surprised to see her girls wearing nothing but their birthday suits standing behind the hen house.

Mommy Baker was a woman who loved to laugh, and when she seen her girls, she began to laugh. Soon she was laughing so hard she lost her balance and leaned back against the hen house to keep from falling. Delphia and Lucille told her of the events of the day, and they soon realized their brothers had pulled the wool over their eyes. My grandmother never forgot this

event, and she laughed each time she told it to her family.

Years later my Maw maw was visiting with me, and while here, we took a group of 4-H Members tubing down a local river. My 65-year-old grandmother had a great time. On a slow stretch of river, she told me her story and laughed until she nearly turned over in her tube.

So, get out, enjoy the hot weather and go skinny dipping. Just make sure you remember where you hide your clothing.

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

Optimal moisture content is when most of the soil is still in a ball in your hand, but when you touch it, it begins to break apart again.

In vegetables, it usually takes until the first fruit is set and ripening on the plant for the roots to be fully developed. This typically (of course, depending on the kind of plant) takes anywhere between 3 and 6 weeks from the date of transplant. For trees and shrubs (and blue, black and raspberries, etc.) usually takes most of a growing season to accomplish. For example, if a blueberry bush were set out in early May, it would need this kind of watering until the end of August, and maybe longer depending on the timing of rain or heat.

If you have any questions about watering, how long or when to water, or any other concerns, please feel free to contact your County Extension Office.

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

His death on the cross, then His providential love can overcome fear of the unknown, even fear of death.

You know your destiny. Jesus went to prepare a place for you, and it’s a place of love that no uncertainties in this life can take away.

Knowing Him, you can stand firm in your faith, abide in God’s love, and rebuke the winds of fear.

Varian...

continued from Page 4A

derelict docks, and though there are not that many, the ones that do exist pose dangers to all users of the lake. Two have recently broken loose and floated the entire length of the lake, causing quite a bit of damage. We have been asked to identify those docks, and according to TVA.gov section 1304.406, the TVA will move forward to solve this problem.

Of most concern is lake debris, which has increased significantly over the past three years. Our project has received enthusiastic support from Union County officials, Fire Department, TVA, and local businesses and individuals. We intend to have this complicated and detailed problem resolved as soon as possible, and we welcome and encourage input from our local community.

As always, please step forward to assist us. LNI-Ablast@outlook.com.

Lynn Varian
President
Lake Nottely
Improvement Association

Guthrie...

continued from Page 4A

charged, serving time.

Traditional values are undermined and eradicated from society, replaced by a Luciferian hymn extolling evil. Politicians, Mainstreet, and social media are complicit via scripted lies.

All is not well in America. The stock market artificially propped up, inflation rising, the border crisis replenishes child trafficking, wars bubble to the surface worldwide, attempted brainwashing of our military to the Marxist mantra... ditto Critical Race Theory in schools.

Awake, Americans! Your country needs you! Get involved in the running of your communities before the goose is fully cooked.

Lucinda Guthrie

Walters-Taylor...

continued from Page 4A

retirement ceremony, and we’d love to see each and every one of you there to support us in that endeavor.

It’s a short one this week, I’m on vacation, but I just wanted to touch base. And so, until we Muse again, I bid you, “At Ease!”