

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### COVID-19 Where to Find Information

There have been many questions about COVID-19. Some of them can be answered and some cannot, at least not at this moment. One of the major roles of emergency management is to provide information about emergencies and preparedness. Union County Emergency Management has provided information about COVID-19 as we have received it. That has proven difficult at times due to the lack of information or the rapid pace at which information changes. However, there are several places where anyone can find information on COVID-19.

The Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH) has information about COVID-19 on their website and that information is updated every day at 3:00 pm. This site provides information on the virus, testing, and cases. This information includes the total number of cases that have been reported in a county since they have started keeping track. This number does not mean that there are that many people infected in the county at that moment. It simply means that there have been that many reported. Some of the people who have tested positive have now either recovered or has been isolated for 14 days. We are not provided information on how many people have recovered. GDPH also has a COVID-19 hotline at (844) 442-2681 for those who wish to call for information.

Another place is the Centers of Disease Control (CDC) website. This site is updated regularly and has important information such as the numbers of cases. You can find the latest information on the virus, guidelines, testing, and contact tracing. On this site, you can go to Data and Surveillance to find cases by county of each state.

This information on case numbers is a total of confirmed cases. Confirming cases takes time. There is no real time information that can provide us an accurate picture of how many active cases are in our county at any given time. We look at the above-mentioned sites every day and are provided with information from various other sources on a daily basis that helps us get an idea of how many possible cases but there is no certainty.

The bottom line is that we cannot tell how many people have COVID-19 in our county at any given time. To state a number

See *Fire*, page 5A

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



### Work of God

You can tell much about your view of work by what you think about retirement. The modern notion of retirement as a permanent vacation creates a bias against the virtue of work. Consider some examples.

In 2018, an investment services company ran a Super Bowl ad in which a granny DJ-ed a modern dance club, an elderly fireman struggled with a pressurized hose, and an aged UPS worker fumbled packages. The message was clear: If you have to work in retirement, you're a failure. "I plan to work only until I can afford to retire" sounds like all work is bad. Yet God made us to produce, create, and serve because He does. That invites work as worship of the Creator. Dorothy Sayers wrote, "(Work) should be the full expression of the worker's faculties, the thing in which he finds spiritual, mental, and bodily satisfaction, and the medium in which he offers himself to God." That's true whether or not you receive a paycheck.

When Alabama football coach "Bear" Bryant retired after the 1982 season, someone asked what he would do. "Probably croak in a week," he said. He died one month later, and never had the chance to explore life beyond coaching. If you say, "I don't know what else I'd do," let me remind you that you are not your career. Tim Keller writes, "Many modern people seek a kind of salvation - self-esteem and self-worth - from career success." That's idolatry. For the Christian, your identity and success are in Christ. He prepares your work regardless of your career status (Eph. 2:10).

Another fallacy is, "I'm too old to accomplish anything meaningful." That is the lament of the retiree who yearns for significance but is trapped by the mindset that life is measured only by previous success. When you work to serve others, you are doing significant things. "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. 4:10). The time, experience, and knowledge that earned you the tools of the volunteer, the advisor, the neighbor that engages the community. Whether paid or not, work "as for the Lord" (Col. 3:23) is meaningful.

See *Fowler*, page 5A

**All Things New**  
*Wayne Fowler*



### Commissioner's Questions

**Q. I have a tree that is about to fall across my road. What do I need to do?**

A. Please call the Road Department at 706-439-6062 to report the problem. They will go out and investigate the issue and prioritize their response. If the tree is causing a danger to the public they will respond immediately to take care of the problem, otherwise they may need to make a work order so that when a crew is scheduled to be in the area they can correct the problem then.

**Q. What if the tree has fallen across the road? What do I do?**

A. Please call the Road Department at 706-439-6062 to report the problem. If there is a tree across the road, they will come immediately to take care of it. If it is an emergency after hours, call 911. It is important to also remember that 911 can dispatch the Road Department for immediate tree/road needs.

**Q. What happens when a tree falls on a private road?**

A. It would be handled the same way. The Road Department would come out and make the road passable. When the tree is cut and removed from the roadway, the clean-up portion would be left to the property owners of the road. Please call the Road Department at 706-439-6062 to report a problem; if it is an emergency after hours, call 911.

**Q. What if I am not happy with the response from the Road Department; I would rather speak with you, the Commissioner, about the problem. What do I do then?**

A. I can be reached by calling our office number at 706-439-6000. My staff may ask you to explain the nature of your call. Please understand they are following directions so that we may better understand how we can be of service to you while at the same time be able to reply to your problem as soon as possible.

**Q. Most road related questions you answer start with "call the Road Department". Why is that?**

A. The Road Department has standards and procedures that are adhered to when responding to problems or reports of problems related to roads. The first step is to report the problem. After the problem is reported, someone has to go out and investigate so that a decision on corrective action can be made. It may re-

See *Paris*, page 5A

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



### Drug Free Mountain Life

#### Parents and Early Prevention Series - Part 3

Have you ever wondered what struggles other parents or caregivers of teens encounter when dealing with drugs and alcohol today?

You may feel that you are the only one with questions and concerns and are reluctant to discuss this topic with others due to the stigma surrounding alcohol and drug use. Here is the GOOD NEWS!! You are not the only parent with questions and concerns about how to manage your teen and the topic of drug use.

The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

Partnership for Drug Free Kids recently conducted eight focus groups across the country with a diverse set of parents of 11- to 16-year-olds and found that an overwhelming majority shared similar concerns and reservations about how to manage early prevention strategies with their teens. Some were certain that their kids had

See *Drug Free*, page 5A

### Letters to the Editor

#### Where is my country?

To the Editor,

Speaking as a 73-year-old Vietnam Combat Veteran, I often ask myself this question: "Is the country that those of us who fought and died for deserving of our contributions?"

Too many power-hungry politicians in both political parties have lost track of our Founding Fathers' message and our Constitution.

As citizens, we must realize that politicians pit us against each other for their benefit, not our benefit. We all need to not play this game.

I am encouraged by the social push-back by our citizens who are against those in power who are using their unchecked power to dishonor all of us, and especially those of us who have served our country in the Armed Forces.

To those who RIOT to make THEIR point, you are not honoring those of us who fought and serve to defend your right to "PEACEABLY" protest.

God bless those who respectfully hold our politicians and rioters accountable by supporting the rule of law.

**Gary Chamberlain**  
Vietnam Veteran (1967)

#### Stealing from Graves

To the Editor,

This is for the person or persons who are taking flowers, vases and figurines off the graves in Union and Fannin County. Anyone who takes objects from a grave is the lowest of lowlife scumbags. Every time you look at or think about the objects you have taken, I want that to remind you of what a lowlife scumbag thief you are.

**Maude Harkins**

#### We need expanded vote-by-mail. Our democracy depends on it.

To the Editor,

COVID-19 is wreaking havoc on our families, our economy and our elections. But Congress has the power to intervene right now.

In response to safety concerns and pressure from constituents like me, Congress has already passed limited funds to expand absentee voting, online registration and in-person early voting, but it's simply not enough.

Without \$4 billion in total funding for election assistance, voters may not be able to make their voices heard during one of the most important elections of our lifetime. We need our leaders to prevent a situation where any voter is forced to choose between protecting their health

See *Bruce*, page 5A



### Firewise Community

National Firewise Communities Program - Where You Live. How You Live.

Over the past century, America's population has nearly tripled, with much of the growth flowing into traditionally natural areas. This trend has created an extremely complex landscape that has come to be known as the wildland/urban interface. Encroaching development into forests, grasslands, and farms has put lives, property, and natural resources at risk from wildfire. Unfortunately, once a wildfire ignites, firefighters are limited in what they can do to protect the values in its path. The National Firewise Communities Program is a national interagency program that encourages partnerships among communities, homeowners, private industry, tribes, and public agencies and officials to develop and implement local solutions for wildfire preparedness - before a fire starts.

Wildfires are a natural process. It is the vision of Firewise Communities that, with adequate planning and cooperation among varying interests, wildfires can occur without disastrous loss of life, property, and resources. To that end, the National Firewise Communities Program provides several wildland/urban interface resources for firefighter safety, community planning, landscaping, construction, and maintenance to help protect people, property, and natural resources from wildland fire. The best approach to wildfire preparedness involves utilizing the wide range of Firewise practices.

The National Firewise Communities Program offers a series of practical steps (landscaping, home construction and design, community planning, etc.) that individuals and communities can take to reduce their vulnerability to wildfire. Using at least one element recommended by the National Firewise Communities Program and adding other elements over time will begin to protect against the risk of fire in the wildland/urban interface.

Examples of Firewise techniques for property owners include creating a defensible space around residential structures by thinning trees and brush; choosing fire-resistant plants; selecting ignition-resistant building materials; positioning structures away from slopes; and working with firefighters to develop emergency plans. The Firewise Communities program provides several wildland/urban interface resources for firefighter safety, community planning, landscaping, construction, and maintenance.

The Firewise Web site ([www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)) provides educational information about wild-

See *Riley*, page 5A

**RC&D Executive Director**

*Frank Riley*



### A New Ax and Saw

Coon was born to Lon and Laura Cummings in July of 1915. He married the love of his life, Glenna Mae, in 1936. The young couple lived in the "weaning off house" just a short distance from his parents. Just like his father, Papa made his living off the land. Not long after their marriage, his father Lon came to see him one evening. It seems that a man named Nix from Phil Campbell was trying to sell some land across the branch and through the woods about 1/2 mile from Lon's place. The man offered to sell the land to Papa and a couple of brothers and brother-in-law. Papa and those men went into debt to buy 80 acres of land each from Mr. Nix. He was so worried because he owed a whopping \$80. He told me he had difficulty sleeping at night due to the worry about paying off that land.

Lon was proud of his sons for making their first land purchase. Little did he realize that Coon would be the only one to not only hold onto his land, but he would enlarge his purchase as well. Papa and Granny went right to work on that land. But, before he could work on the land, he had to purchase some tools. Papa ordered a couple of items from the Sears & Roebuck Company. He bought a double-bit axe which cost him an arm and a leg. Recently, I acquired a replica 1927 catalogue from the Sears Company. That axe cost my grandfather \$2.25. At the same he also ordered a cross-cut saw. The saw cost him \$2.95, while the handles and hardware cost another 50 cents. Also purchased was a 14-foot logging chain for \$3.90. He was now ready to go to work.

Papa and Granny spent the next 5-7 years clearing their land. They cut down and hauled away most of the smaller trees. But, the larger trees they girdled and left them standing. Girdling is a process where the lower 3 1/2 feet of bark is stripped from the bottom of the tree. The young couple plowed around the standing timber. After a few years the standing timber fell to the ground and was used for firewood. Papa made enough money on his crop to pay for his first 80 acres in a 5-year period. However, the story of the saw continued.

Papa also used the saw to cut timber for his house. Granny and Papa cut the logs and then hauled them to a mill to be converted into lumber. All this was hard work which was done between trying to get a crop of cotton ready to gin and raising two sons. But, they soon had a roof up with only a few of the walls covered. They used poplar, oak and pine lumber to build their new home. Since it was summertime, the young fam-

See *Cummings*, page 5A

**Around The Farm**

*Mickey Cummings*



### Fungal Diseases

This year has been very wet. We've received more cumulative rainfall than we did in 2018 and 2019 through July 1st. Rainfall creates good conditions for a number of different plant diseases. Let's talk about fungal diseases.

A useful tool for understanding why plant diseases occur is the plant disease triangle.

In one corner is plant susceptibility. Susceptibility is predetermined by the plant's physiology. The second corner of the triangle is the pathogen. It may seem like a no-brainer, but the disease causing pathogen must be present for plants to get sick. The third corner is a favorable environment for the disease to occur. Most diseases like wet conditions, which is why all the rain we've been getting can be problematic. If any one of the corners is missing from the disease triangle then disease will not be present in your plants.

Root rots are a problematic disease in Georgia. They love humid, wet conditions, with poorly drained soils. Root rots do most of their damage below the soil line so they may not be obvious at first. Some symptoms to look out for are wilting leaves, yellowing leaves, and poor growth. Root rots attack the roots, decreasing the plant's ability to uptake water and nutrients. Incorporating organic matter into your soil and reducing plant stress will make a less favorable environment for root rots.

Fungal leaf spots covers a wide range of plant diseases that are often specific to certain plants. Symptoms are small spots on leaves that have tan or gray centers, and dark brown to purple margins. Fungal leaf spots survive on fallen plant debris, so it's important to remove debris after it's fallen to keep your area sanitary. Leaf spots also like high humidity. Pruning your plants to increase air flow can help reduce the risk of disease. If you are irrigating your plants try to do it in the morning so that the foliage has time to dry off by the nighttime. Wet, cool leaves is a like an all you can eat buffet to fungal leaf spots.

Rusts are easily identified by the raised pustules on the undersides of the leaves. The pustules will break open and release an orange powder. Keeping leaves dry and removing infected leaves will help keep disease pressure down.

Finally, Botrytis is a specific disease that loves wet, dead plant material. Quick removal of dead flowers or leaves will keep Botrytis in check. Botrytis will usually only be a problem if a plant is wounded or if air flow is poor.

See *Williams*, page 5A

**Watching and Working**

*Jacob Williams*



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