

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Seat Belts

Summer usually means a summer vacation. We travel to some vacation spot and spend a week trying to relax. On vacation this year, it was interesting to me to see so many people who were driving and riding in the most unsafe way. The main thing that alarmed me was there are still so many people who do not wear seat belts.

Being in emergency services for 28 years, I have seen many motor vehicle accidents, or MVCs. Some have been worse than others, but for the most part, people who were wearing a seat belt were less likely to be seriously injured or killed. In the early 1990s, before the Georgia seat belt law, I remember there were more fatalities each year from MVCs because people didn't wear seat belts.

Seat belts have been proven to save lives. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in 2016, there were 37,461 people killed in motor vehicle crashes, and 48 percent were not wearing seat belts. That year alone, seat belts saved an estimated 14,668 lives.

A motor vehicle accident is violent. The vehicle is out of control; it can be spinning, rolling or even leave the highway. Seat belts keep passengers in place and prevent them from moving around in the vehicle or being ejected.

People also believe that if they have air bags this means they do not have to wear seat belts. That is not true. The new vehicles of today are designed for safety. They are designed for occupants to use seat belts, and the air bags are there to supplement the seat belts. Air bags activate in a fraction of a second and deploy at over 100 miles per hour. Not wearing a seat belt when air bags deploy can cause more harm. It is best to utilize seat belts with air bags.

The most alarming issue when it comes to air bags is when the front seat passenger has their feet or legs on the dash. This is very dangerous. They must remember that the air bag will deploy very fast and violently. They will not have time to move. The result will be broken legs or pelvis from the air bag.

Motor vehicle accidents are going to happen. We want people to remember that it can happen to you, and that wearing a seat belt reduces the chances of being seriously injured or killed.

Union County Fire Department
~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



The Search

We are searching creatures, sometimes due to real need, but often to escape boredom or pain. We may not even know what we are really searching for, or that we're really searching!

The winter snows in Chicago chased the middle-aged couple to Arizona for kinder weather. On Sunday, as they explored Cave Creek, they spotted a charming little church building. On a whim, they joined the worshippers. The minister spoke with simple elegance about obedience to God. The man was so unexpectedly moved that he responded to the altar call and was baptized that day in 1971, some 1,700 miles from home. You know the man as Paul Harvey, the legendary radio commentator.

Years prior, it was John 3:16 that moved Harvey to place his faith in Christ. But as he explained, "Something was missing. There was a vague emptiness in my life." That country preacher hit the mark when he called for total submission to God, with the first act of obedience being believer's baptism. Harvey recounted, "Submission to God. I began to realize how much of me I had been holding back. Could this be the source of my uneasiness? Afterward, I cried like a baby, a kind of release, I suppose."

C.S. Lewis was also caught off guard. His early life was marked with the pain of losing his mother, the coldness of his grieving father, and the ravages of World War I trench warfare. As an Oxford don, he conducted an intellectual search for truth in atheism, idealism and pantheism. He was 31 when he finally admitted that God exists, but his theism was only an intellectual position. He often engaged his Christian friends J.R.R. Tolkien and Hugo Dyson, like that long talk during a stroll on Addison's Walk near Magdalen College one fall evening in 1931. A few days later, he realized that he believed the claims of Christ, and that long talk had much to do with it.

Zaccheus was a rich tax collector, apparently corrupt. He climbed a tree to see Jesus passing by. To his surprise, Jesus wanted to visit with him. As a result, Zaccheus was moved to make amends, and Jesus declared, "Today, salvation has come to this house!"

Paul Harvey was just attending church when Jesus called

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

This week's questions and answers focus on the Union County Tax Assessor's Office. Susie Phillips is the Chief Tax Appraiser and in charge of this office. These questions are some of the most common questions we receive, and the answers contain general information. If you have further questions, you can call the Union County Tax Assessor Office at 706-439-6011.

Q. What exactly does the Tax Assessor's Office do?

A. The Tax Assessor's Office has five real-property appraisers and one personal property appraiser who determine the value of your property based on the fair market value of the taxable real or personal property. The Tax Assessor's Office keeps records of each individual parcel of property, which includes the name and address of the owners, and the evaluation of the land and building on each parcel. More information on the entire process of valuing property can be found at www.qpublic.net/GA/Union.

Q. How is my property value determined?

A. Property tax is an ad valorem tax based upon the value of 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 are boats, airplanes, business inventory, and any equipment, furniture and fixtures needed to run a business. The assessors and appraisers merely interpret what is happening in the marketplace, and the appraised value is simply the estimate of what the property is worth.

Q. Are there property exemptions available to me?

A. There are exemptions or special assessment programs that your property may qualify for. Some of these include Homestead and Disabled Veterans Exemptions, preferential agriculture assessments, conservation use, residential transitional assessments, and environmentally sensitive assessments. Applications for these exemptions or special assessments must be made prior to April 1 of the year the exemption is being sought. For more information on this, you can call the Tax Assessor's Office at 706-439-6011, or go by their office located at 65 Courthouse Street, Blairsville, in the Union County Courthouse.

Q. I think the Tax Assessor's Office has my property

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Youth Drug Use on the Decline

Youth drug use has been on a steady decline during the past decade, according to the latest Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) report.

In 2007, 22.6 percent of young people surveyed for the report admitted to using select illicit drugs. By 2017, that number dropped to 14 percent. In addition, the percentage of high schoolers who had injected an illegal drug in their lifetime dipped from 2 percent in 2007 to 1.5 percent in 2017.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention developed the YRBSS in the early 1990s. It focuses on six health-related categories (tobacco use, violence, alcohol/drug use, sexual behavior, dietary behavior and physical inactivity).

It also includes a survey (the Youth Risk

See Drug Free, page 5A

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.

"It's exciting for everyone to focus on the Governor's race!"

"I just wish the Governor's race would focus on us."

RC&D

Experimental Aircraft Association AirVenture 2018

I recently attended an event that was completely different from my usual activity. It did not involve wildfire and did not involve growing crops, except for the beautiful farms along the way to Oshkosh from where I was staying in Two Rivers, Wisconsin.

I attended the Experimental Aircraft Association's (EAA) AirVenture 2018 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. It is the world's largest air show, fly-in, aviation gathering, trade show, aviation education forums, and any other words to describe everything aviation you can think of. Many pilots who fly in camp under their aircraft's wings on the grass along the runways or in the campgrounds on the site. AirVenture has everything from the oldest airplanes to the smallest homebuilt, from the largest military transport to all of the famous warbirds (B-17,

RC&D Executive Director
Frank Riley



See Riley, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Ecstatic

In direct response to the writer of the Aug. 1 letter to the editor titled "Happy now?," yes, I am not just "happy now," I'm ecstatic. You referred back to a speech you wrote in 1963, stating that "American politicians ... would see the beauty of Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda..."

You were right. Except it's called the fake media and radical left-wing anarchist politicians like Maxine Waters and Antifa. You're either a bald-faced liar or keep your face 24/7 in front of CNN/MSNBC. I'd like to think both when you stated: "The media has identified over six 'provable' lies per 'day' since becoming president." It's liberal colleges, Antifa and Trump haters like you who want to shut down freedom of speech.

Child separations at the border have been going on for decades, but only now are liberals screaming about it.

You said: "...since Trump became President, Putin has ... GOP devotees." That must be why President Trump has established at least three sanctions against Russia.

President Trump is the only president in history to bring North Korea to the table, having them stop missile testing and disbanding a nu-

See Crawford, page 5A

What's the rush?

In the Aug. 1 edition of the newspaper, Commissioner Paris says he will place SPLOST V on the November 2018 ballot for a renewal of the present tax that expires in 2021, instead of waiting until 2020 to vote on said tax. What's the rush, Mr. Paris? By having the vote this year, Mr. Paris is depriving the present 16 and 17-year-old young people of their right to vote on whether or not they prefer the tax. Also, by voting in 2018, he is essentially allowing those who die between 2018 and 2020 to vote from the grave. A new twist in denying one segment the ability to vote, and a new twist on dead people voting. Shame on you, Mr. Paris. (Tongue-in-cheek)

Mike Sims

Political Cartoons

Political cartoons can be funny, but their main purpose is to persuade the reader. Last week's cartoon of the piggy bank representing the government keeping tax money must have been perplexing to the millions of people who benefit from government spending.

How about military personnel, police, firemen and teachers who are paid to provide much

See Maloney, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Very Happy

I am very proud to have campaigned hard for him. Each of our presidents has a record of killing opponents. There is more than one way to make peace. Diplomacy, friendship and communication will lead to peace and mutual prosperity.

Our traditional, longtime European allies have been ripping us off for many administrations; President Trump is fixing what decades of leaders from both sides of the isle have perpetuated. America is near bankrupt and should be run like a corporation with stockholders (We the People) to answer to. Since Trump became president, Putin's support is up all over the world. The universe is ready for peace, and we will not achieve it poking the bear in the eye with a stick. Everyone is flawed. Time for an economy based on hard work and tangible achievements, not war.

I am very happy with what the new tax code has done for our small business. As for the constant criticism; I really don't care. Do you? Not tired of winning yet.

Just saying,
Cindy Mae Tidwell

3D-Printed Guns

In its purest form, a 3D-printed gun is a gun printed out of plastic on a special (and expensive) printer. Even though plastic, the gun is not "undetectable" inasmuch as it has a metal firing pin and other metal parts. However, is the gun safe?

According to CNN, individuals testing such guns in Europe have concluded they could be more harmful to the shooter than to the intended target. German police tested such a gun and concluded it "could endanger the shooter as much as anyone else."

This is common sense for those who understand firearms, who understand the pressures associated with a chambered cartridge at the point at which a primer is struck by the firing pin and powder ignites within the shell casing. And it is also why the focus of 3D-printed guns is not the plastic gun so often shown during establishment media reports and by anti-Second Amendment politicians, but is an otherwise metal gun with a plastic lower (or frame) made on a 3D printer. Made of metal, the upper cannot be 3D-printed.

Consider the wildly popular AR-15. That rifle consists of a lower, which contains the trigger and hammer, and an upper, which contains the bolt carrier group and to which the barrel is attached. Of all these parts, the government

See Mitchell, page 5A

Rock Bridge

The Rock Bridge had always intrigued me. Mom had told me stories of the place since I was old enough to remember. It was a place of natural beauty, and it also had a reputation with a dark past. I visit the place in my dreams often, and every now and then I go back to visit. Even today, it is beautiful yet mysterious at the same time.

Bill and Delphia Adams owned a small piece of land at the top of a ridge just above and north of Little Bear Creek. Just to the south of the creek and halfway up the next ridge, the Rock Bridge was located along with a saddle-shaped rock called Saddle Rock. Hiram Baker had settled this area in the 1850s, and after his death, the land had passed from one Baker to another for three generations until mine. But even before my ancestors came to the area, the Rock Bridge had a dark past.

I have always been told that a family of Cherokee Indians lived under this bridge, and their ancestors had lived there for generations before Christopher Columbus. Then, two things happened that would change the way these people lived. First, Andrew Jackson was elected as president of the young United States. And second, gold was discovered in Dahlonega. This was the excuse President Jackson was looking for, prompting him to sign an executive order leading to the removal of the Cherokee and Creek nations from their homelands in Alabama and Georgia.

The soldiers came to the area around the Rock Bridge, rounded up the families and forced them on to the infamous "Trail of Tears." When the soldiers came to the "Rock Bridge," a young Cherokee maiden screamed as she ran. In her attempt to evade the soldiers, she slipped and fell from the top of the bridge, resulting in her death. It has been told many times that if you visited the area at midnight, you could still hear the screams of the young maiden as if she were running from the soldiers. My 3X-great grandmother Mandy lived close by as a little girl, and she told her grandchildren she had heard the maiden screaming. Those screams haunted her the rest of her life.

Fifteen years later, my 3X-great grandfather settled in the area. He and Mandy built a log home not too far from the Rock Bridge. Mandy loved the area and spent many a day with her children exploring. She and her children swam in the creek and found a large rock from which they could jump in. They built fires under the bridge to cook their lunch, and they even found a rock close by where they could sit and watch

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Lichen

Have you seen moss growing on trees? Lichen is the term used for the blue-green, papery growth that is often found on the bark of trees and other perennials. Sometimes, folks are concerned over the growth of lichen because they are concerned that it may be damaging their tree. Let's talk about what lichens are, what causes them, and what you can do to control them.

Lichens are really made up of a couple of different organisms. They will usually have a fungus and an algae. These organisms work together in a relationship that is mutually beneficial. Together, these organisms produce the thallus, which is the leaf-like growth that people see and recognize as lichen. Each organism has its own role in the relationship. The fungus provides a physical structure for growth because the algae is slimy and has no structure. The fungus also provides water and minerals from the air or the material that the lichen is growing on. The algae are capable of photosynthesis, so they provide the energy needed for life. Some algae are also able to pull nitrogen from the atmosphere that the lichen need for development. Together, they are able to combine and sustain life. It has been said that lichens are fungi that have discovered agriculture because of the way they cultivate algae.

Lichens grow all over the world. Different species will grow on different surfaces. For example, lichen that you see on a rock will not grow on a tree. Different colors are also possible. Lichen may begin to grow more on a plant if that plant has lost some of its leaves. If the leaves fall from a tree, more sunlight is able to penetrate to the branches and trunk of the tree, which will enable the growth of more lichen. Lichen is an opportunistic grower, meaning that healthy, actively growing plants will not have as much lichen on them. If there is an abundant amount of lichen on a plant, that means there could be something that is stressing your plant, allowing the opportunistic lichen to grow. That could be a nutritional deficiency, not enough water (not likely this year), insects or disease.

Lichens do not kill plants. An abundant amount of lichen can be an indicator that something else is affecting the plant. There are some products that are recommended for use on lichen that is also safe for plants. You can remove lichen manually by gently scraping it from the bark. If you see a tree that has a lot of lichen growing on it, carefully examine the plant. Here are some things to look for. Has the plant already lost its leaves? Are there holes in the bark from insects boring? Has the plant been receiving enough

See Williams, page 5A

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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