

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Self-Rewards II

Self-rewards are ways that we reward ourselves when we have accomplished tasks at home or at work. It is an excellent way to build one's self-esteem and self-worth. We can feel the positive impact, and this process of rewarding ourselves is continuous. Each day at home, work, school, or wherever you plant your feet, you will have opportunities to accomplish many valuable tasks, and as a result, reward yourself multiple times. Depending on how you evaluate each task, you are the one to determine the reward. You may feel that a certain task is worth an ice cream cone while another deserves a nice restaurant meal, extra time to read a book, or watching a favorite television program. This goes for the man or woman. Each deserves a reward when accomplishing chores or duties. You are also the one to decide on what tasks deserve what rewards.

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



Self-rewards may feel quite strange at first because we have seldom taken the time or opportunity to be good to ourselves. So prepare yourself for some wonderful moments after you begin applying self-rewards on yourself. All children in a family need daily chores once they reach an age in which responsibilities can be administered and transacted. And the child needs to be rewarded in some way—this builds their confidence and self-esteem. A small amount can be started at the beginning, such as washing the dishes, setting the table, and vacuuming the house. As the child matures, the duties can increase such as planning the evening meals, cooking the food, household shopping, and babysitting the younger siblings. During the years I have been a therapist, I have encountered many individuals who have never applied self-rewards on themselves for one reason or the other. What a tragedy! It may sound like a foreign language when talking about the reward system. At first, it may not seem natural to do so. Doing the self-rewards at first can become most difficult because it involves the subconscious mind. The subconscious part of our brain is highly stubborn. It hates to change because it has been used to doing things the same way indefinitely. The good news is that our stubborn subconscious mind can change.

It can be hard to wrap our minds around the idea of celebrating doing tasks with rewards. But as time progresses, it can become

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Reason to Work

A wise man told me once that everyone has at least one bad job experience. He sure had his. His boss made arbitrary and irrational demands, fomenting discouraging working conditions. But he learned to focus on the work and how people would benefit from it.

I talked to him during my own bad job experience working for a boss who flashed the same degrading reactions. I only lasted six months in that position. But for decades now the residential subdivision I designed has been a place for growing families to laugh, cry, dream, and retreat. That's meaningful.

I didn't realize it at the time, but there's a Christian principle here. Work can be a burden, can't it? But doesn't Jesus say something about burdens? "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matt. 11:28-29). You can rest your soul through faith in Him. You can also relieve the burden of work by bringing it into His rest.

You do that by rethinking why you work and who you ultimately work for. The burdensome reasons to work range from just working for a paycheck to trying to establish an identity or chase away a sense of insignificance. Such reasons are a setup for disillusionment. In the movie, "Chariots of Fire," one man ran in the Olympics to "justify my existence." The other knew God made him fast and said, "When I run, I feel His pleasure." Both won their races but only one found meaning in his effort.

When you see your work as a calling, the place where God invests your life, your emotional muscle for carrying job pressures is strengthened. It attaches meaning to the work. You can endure much when you understand the why, the big picture. To "work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Col. 3:23) is to accept God's purpose for your daily labors.

Dorothy Sayers' startling claim is that "the worker's first duty is to serve the work." She takes issue with a focus on serving the "community" (loving your neighbor) if it omits the first part of the command: loving God. If you serve only the community,

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Each year I try to publish a set of questions to inform citizens of how building and construction in Union County is going using information provided to us by Union County Building and Development Office.

Q. How many new home permits were issued in 2022?

A. There was a total of 252 permits issued, which included 214 custom homes and 38 spec homes. That is a lot of homes, and it is a very good indication of economic stability for our mountain area. New homes being built provide jobs for builders, grading and gravel contractors and all building trades including plumbing, electrical, cabinets, appliances, and landscaping. With everyone having more work available, they have more money to spend, which stimulates the economy.

Q. Did the number of permits issued for new homes increase from 2021 to 2022?

A. The number of building permits issued was exactly the same for 2022 as it was for the previous year.

Q. So far this year, does it seem like the permits issued are increasing?

A. We are eight months into 2023. It appears that the number of building permits issued are decreasing. The Building & Development Department reports at the end of July, 2023, there was a decrease of 40 building permits when compared to the previous year.

Q. Does Union County keep up with Building Permits issued from year to year to show the trends in homes being built?

A. Absolutely! This is very important information for us as the County to have and it is also good for the public to be aware also.

2010 - 68; 2011 - 59; 2012 - 88; 2013 - 99; 2014 - 87; 2015 - 129; 2016 - 154; 2017 - 170; 2018 - 211; 2019 - 221; 2020 - 230; 2021 - 252; 2022 - 252; Through July 2023 - 133

Q. What office do I contact if I need to obtain a building permit?

A. You would contact the Union County Building and De-

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



No Security, No Funding

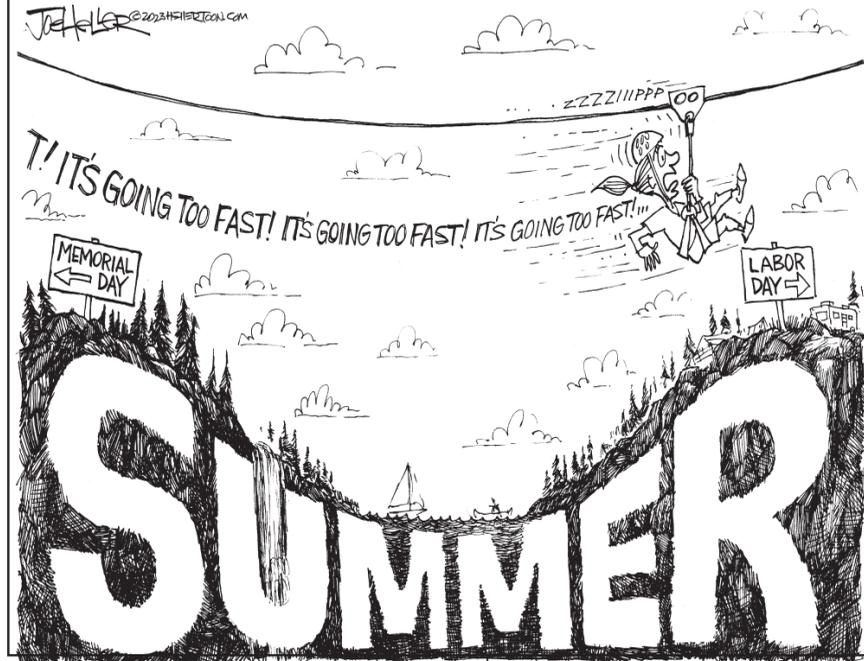
Congress will have a grueling spending fight on its hands when members return to Washington in a few weeks. We'll only have a few legislative days before government funding expires on September 30th - leaving a very short timeframe to pass and enact all 12 appropriations bills.

Therefore, both House and Senate leadership are preparing for a short-term extension of government funding through a Continuing Resolution (CR) to avoid a government shutdown. Yet CRs are notoriously used to kick the can down the road, intentionally forcing members to engage in a spending battle in December prior to leaving town for Christmas. Last year, this tactic led to a disastrous omnibus spending bill, which was chock full of Democrats' Big Government Socialist policies and pricey pork projects.

Given our dire economic outlook, we simply cannot go down this road again.

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United States Congressman Representative Andrew Clyde



Chamber of Commerce

When you look at the paper you can't help but notice the article regarding School Funding and the possible changes in the millage rate. Let's face it, no one wants to pay more in property tax than what you already currently do. With that being said, we are extremely fortunate to have the school system we have. If you have heard me speak, you have heard me say a "vibrant community" is what you need - good leaders, good health care, good recreation for all, and good schools for our children.

It is said that our community is blessed to have all the above. While it is a cliché, our students are our future, which includes our future workforce. Union County Schools has one of the highest graduation rates and has been recognized for certain programs for our special needs students. The regional College and Career Academy works with surrounding school districts to avoid duplication of such services. One that speaks out the most is the Computer Science Pathway.

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Reflects 'Snuffy Smith' Mentality

Editor's Note: This previously published letter to the editor was submitted by a resident interested in the Five-Commissioner Board issue. The late Zell Miller of Young Harris penned the letter in response to an Atlanta Journal-Constitution editorial criticizing the sole-commissioner style of government in Towns County. It was originally published in the AJC on Sept. 6, 1987, and then re-published in the North Georgia News that same month. Miller served as Georgia Governor and U.S. Senator and did much else for these mountain communities.

I write in response to the lead editorial in the Perspective section of Aug. 30. The editorial proposes that "like butter churns and buggy whips, one-commissioner county government needs to be dispatched to history," and criticizes Towns County as an example.

Do you suggest that we use the multimem-

See Miller, page 5A

Fair and Balanced

Dear Editor,
Recently moved up though a Georgia native. Is the paper a GOP one?
I've read 'the one side' of national politics offered on the opinion page.

Ann Breslauer

Time Running Out

Dear Editor,
Something has been bothering me for months, maybe it bothers the readers, too.
I see smash-and-grab videos on the nightly news. This obvious criminal behavior is ignored by police and local prosecutors. Can someone tell me how letting criminals run wild in cities like San Francisco, Kansas City, New York, and others makes sense on any level?

Donald Trump is portrayed as the second coming of Adolf Hitler by most news organiza-

See Ripma, page 5A

Belittling the Elderly

Dear Editor,
I had never attended a School Board meeting before Thursday's tax increase hearing. I immediately understood that it was just a formality. The board looked comfortable in their decision to unashamedly raise your taxes. There was no empathy for the aged citizens who are barely hanging on under the property reassessments that have increased each year to a shocking 78% above 2020 rates.

We had knowledgeable speakers politely

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Letters to the Editor

Don't Bite the Hand that Feeds

Dear Editor,
On Aug. 24, I had my first experience of attending a Union County School Board hearing regarding another property tax increase.

When Chairman Tony Hunter opened the meeting, citizens in the back advised they could not hear him; he responded by suggesting the "hearing impaired" should move to the front of the room.

I was one of those citizens, and I am not hearing impaired, nor were the others. The fact is Mr. Hunter should have used a microphone to speak to the crowd. Makes me wonder if he didn't care if he could be heard. His comment was insulting and inappropriate, and his arrogance unbecoming.

I do hope our students are not treated with such disrespect.

Maureen Harper
Taxpayer

No Tax Hike

Dear Editor,
I will try to keep this one brief. So I got my copy of The North Georgia News last week, and what did I see? The Board of Education is planning to raise our property taxes. I find that very odd since it was in this very paper a couple of years ago that our Political Commissar, Lamar Paris, told us that if his SPLOST wasn't passed that our property taxes would be raised. It passed and they weren't raised. That's as good a job of extortion as when then Vice President Joe Biden told Ukraine that they weren't getting \$1 billion in aid unless they fired the prosecutor who was investigating his son's involvement with the corrupt Ukrainian Energy company Burisma.

I thought the ESPLOST that was passed was supposed to fund our schools. That's how I read it. Now it seems things have changed. How I read that seems to happen with greater frequency these days.

I have no children. I have no plans to have children. Frankly, if the BOE plans on raising our property taxes, I think it should be done on a property by property basis. What I mean by that is this: If a household has NO children in the School System and will not be sending any children into the School system, their property taxes will not be raised.

I'm holding no hopes that THAT will ever happen because of a couple of simple facts:

1. No matter how much we pay in taxes, to Professional Politicians, it's never enough.
2. Politicians, especially liberal ones, have never met other people's money that they didn't want or believe that they are entitled to.

Until I'm guaranteed that OUR School System is focusing on EDUCATION and NOT in-

See Rains, page 5A

Memories of Mom

One of her earliest memories was a snow storm. Her mother, Delphia, was pregnant with her younger brother Ralph, and even though she was a very active person, she had great difficulty in getting around due to her condition. The snow had begun falling that morning after her Daddy, Bill, had dropped off his bus load of kids at Enterprise School. As the day grew longer the snow and the wind had intensified causing the school to cancel the afternoon classes. Her father went back to the school to take the students back home.

Delphia and her two very young children were unaware of the conditions of the gravel roads around Bakertown. But the snow had made the roads impassable. Bill and the students on the bus were soon stuck in the mud and snow. They took shelter in an old abandoned house. They even ripped boards from the walls to build a fire in the fireplace. Meanwhile his pregnant wife and two children had to make do without the help of their Daddy.

She had never been one to let someone or something get the best of her. But her stubbornness was about to lead to a dangerous situation. As the evening grew longer, the snow grew deeper between their house and the old barn where the milk cow was in a stall. There was a small branch between the house and the barn with a foot log which had to be crossed. And snow was piling up around the branch in a drift. She bundled up and told her young children to stay put while she milked their cow. The trip to the barn was uneventful. But, on the way back while carrying the bucket full of milk she slipped on the ice and fell backward into the branch which was now covered with a snowdrift 3 feet deep.

Her condition was difficult. She could not roll over. All feet and arms were higher up than her head. All she could do was to yell for help. The little girl somehow heard her mother's cries for help over the howling wind. She cried out to her older brother Ray, "Mommy needs help." Ray came to the window and he too heard his mother's cries for help. As he put on his coat and hat, he told his younger sister to stay in the house. She paid him no mind and put on her coat and the two siblings rushed to their mother's aid. Somehow the two little children managed to pull their Mom up and out of the snow-drift covered stream without spilling a drop of milk.

She and her brother also tried smoking a couple of times. They had watched the adults roll up tobacco to make cigarettes and they wanted to try out what the adults were doing. Ray had

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Favorite Flowers

This week I wanted to spend a little time talking about some of my favorite flowering plants. These are all plants that are in bloom now. The reason why I'd like to talk about them is they are all native, they bloom late in the summer which is great for pollinators, and sometimes these plants are thought of as weeds. Some of these plants have "weed" in their name. Some people might think that means they can't have them in their yard. I would disagree. These are plants that provide immense value to any landscape.

Joe Pye weed is a beautiful plant that starts to bloom in August. This plant can be about 7 feet tall and has a gorgeous head of light pink flowers at the top. They are perennial so they'll come back each year, and seed out new Joe Pye weeds. They do well in the clay soil that we have. At this time of year, you'll often see them with butterflies clustered around the top. You'll often see these growing on roadsides or in ditches that haven't been maintained, but they can be a great part of a garden landscape design. It can take full or part sun.

Goldenrod is another one of my favorites that sometimes gets a bad rap. Goldenrod is sometimes blamed for causing allergies, but usually ragweed is the culprit. Both plants have yellow flowers, and since the goldenrod is so prolific, unjustly it takes the blame. There are actually over 100 different species of goldenrod out there. It is also a perennial. In the late summer and fall when it's in bloom the flowers can light up an entire field. It's great for pollinators that need to collect some more nectar before they go down for the winter. Goldenrod should be grown in full sun.

Ironweed is another tall plant that can grow up to 8 feet tall. It will have a cluster of purple flowers at the top. It's a perennial that grows in full sun. The seeds that the plant produces are great for birds to eat, making it good for pollinators and wildlife. It can tolerate wet soil, so you may see it in swampy areas that aren't mowed as often.

I have found white, orange, and yellow Jewelweed. These are different species, but are all called jewelweed. This plant likes wet areas and can take spots that are partial shade to deep shade. They start to bloom in the end of July. They are an annual that reseeds itself readily. They get the name jewelweed because when the dew forms on the leaves and flowers it looks like sparkling jewels. Native Americans would use the juice in the stem to treat poison ivy rashes.

All of the plants that I've mentioned here

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UGA extension

Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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Cummings...continued from Page 4A

watched some of the older boys pull the dried leaves from rabbit tobacco and roll these up in cigarette paper. So, he and Mom would slip off into the woods to try their hand at smoking. Uncle Ray would sit against a log and take a long draw of the smoke and tell his younger sister how great it was while she coughed her way through the experience. She would often slip off with her brother to the woods to smoke. But she could never master the art of smoking rabbit tobacco.

Her brother also convinced her to try out his new canoe on Little Bear Creek. Actually, his new canoe was nothing more than an old cast iron bath tub. Somehow, he'd stopped up the drain hole. He placed his younger sister into the tub and used a saw mill slab as a paddle. He told her she could go first since she was his sister. After she was seated, he gently pushed her into the current and away she went. Everything went well until the tub hit a rock which caused it to turn over, dumping her into a deep hole. But, Ray came to the rescue. He was always there for his younger sister.

Her first cousin, Sherwon, was also her best friend. The two of them loved staying with their Grandmother, Mommy Baker. They loved playing in the barn, and after their uncle went to work, they would slip his big white horse out of the barn and ride it all day. They would make sure to brush him down and feed him before Uncle T. D. came home. She remembers the first time she saw Daddy. He was standing in a stairwell at Phil

Campbell High School wearing his letterman's jacket he'd earned for baseball and basketball. She said he was the most handsome young man she'd ever seen. They married after High School and spent their honeymoon in the cotton fields chopping out the weeds. They moved down the road to the weaning off house and I was born a year and three months later. She woke Daddy up one night telling him that someone had stolen her baby. They could hear me crying but could not find me. He grabbed his gun and ran out of the house. Meanwhile she found me between the wall and the bed. She walked outside to stop Daddy from shooting someone and showed him that she'd found her baby.

She accepted the Lord and was baptized in Sherman Ergles' pond sometime in the early 1950s. Some of my earliest memories of her were our nightly bible studies with my brother and sister. After these we would always have prayer, and she insisted that we pray out loud. Daddy was not a Christian at this time and could not stand to hear these prayers. So, he would get up and go outside, even in the winter.

When I was about 11 Mom got sick and needed surgery. The Doctor told my parents that she might not live very long. She responded, "God has told me that I would live through this because my husband is not a Christian and God is not going to let a heathen raise my children."

I could tell you many more things about my Mom if I had more space. I will just say she was a very special person.

Miller...continued from Page 4A

ber Fulton County Commission or Atlanta City Council as examples of local government that ought to be foisted on every other county in the state? No thank you!

I am reminded of something George Washington once said: "My observation is that whenever one person is found adequate to the discharge of a duty by close application thereto, it is worse executed by two persons, and scarcely done at all if three or more are employed therein."

Contrary to the editorial's warnings, the demise of the North Georgia mountains is not imminent. Two-thirds of Towns County is owned by the federal government. Lake Chatuge will not be overdeveloped; the lake and a good portion of its shoreline acreage are owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), which subjects development projects to rigorous screening. Brasstown Bald and its sister peaks will not be bulldozed, nor will the wilderness be destroyed; they are owned by the National Forest Service. The bulk of the county is guaranteed to remain untouched forever.

The small amount of privately held Towns County land means that widespread agricultural development is impossible. The terrain and isolation preclude major industrial development. Given those realities, how do you esteemed Atlanta editors propose that Towns Countians make a living if not through tourism development? Do you suggest that we sell boiled peanuts and pumpkins at roadside stands?

I had hopes that the group of New York Times journalists recently imported to run the Atlanta newspapers would elevate them to a new level of quality and responsibility. I had hoped that Mr. (Bill) Kovach in particular, who comes from the mountains of Tennessee, would bring a new level of understanding. Unfortunately, what we appear to have gotten is New York urban snobbishness.

That feeling builds through the editorial until the last paragraph expresses it in words: Towns County should be "monitored" by a special commission appointed by the governor, because it cannot possibly come up with a competent county commissioner on its own. In other words, those stupid, shiftless mountaineers are going to ruin the scenic beauty of Towns County unless we superior intellectuals go up there and take over.

There it is – the "Snuffy Smith" mentality, which I suppose I should have expected in a newspaper that is insensitive enough to run this offensive comic strip. The daily fare in "Snuffy Smith" is nearly always a variation of one or more of three myths: (1) Mountaineers are ignorant; (2) Mountaineers are lazy; (3) Mountaineers are drunkards. Nothing could be further from the truth.

A higher percentage of Towns County's population has attended college than of the population statewide, and Towns County's public school students consistently score among the brightest in the state on standardized tests. We are not ignorant!

Although Towns County is one of the state's poorest by per capita income, the percentage of its population receiving welfare or food stamps is one of the lowest not only in Georgia but around the nation. We are not lazy!

Towns County is dry and has been for a long, long time. Our incidence of DUI is among the lowest in the state. We are not drunkards!

Towns County could never afford the price tag of a Fulton County Commission. Yet, even with its limited resources and lone commissioner, it has managed to forge a high quality of life. Our crime rate is one of the lowest in the state; our life expectancy exceeds the national average.

The editorial excuses its condescending attitude by suggesting that the mountains and lakes belong to all Georgians. Does Atlanta also belong to all Georgians? Perhaps Atlanta's development should also be placed in the hands of a state commission.

Towns County may have "run afoul of the state's Environmental Protect Division for improper erosion control at building sites and road construction," but then so have most of metro Atlanta's counties for overloading their sewage and waste systems. Is the former any more serious than the latter?

Towns County is shooting for tasteful, quality development. Anyone who doubts that fact should visit the new Fieldstone Inn, or look at the plans for Lake Chatuge Resort, which were recently approved by the TVA after a much more stringent and comprehensive scrutiny than Atlanta's Zoning Review Board has ever applied.

And anyone who thinks that all you have to do to get any sort of development project approved in Towns County is hobnob a little with the county commissioner ought to give it a try or talk to someone who has.

I am the last one to want to see Towns County desecrated by inappropriate or excessive development – I live there. But why should we expect you editors to climb down out of your ivory tower and personally spend time getting to know Towns County before you undertake telling us what to do? After all, you know all about us mountaineers from reading "Snuffy Smith."

Zell Miller

Ashurst...

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a wonderful habit. Before any desired change can occur, the individual must find it necessary and worthwhile to do so.

Clyde... continued from Page 4A

Consequently, I joined my House Freedom Caucus colleagues in opposing any "clean" CR that advances President Biden's radical agenda while also abdicating our fundamental duty of responsibly funding the government. In fact, we will reject any spending measure that fails to secure the border, address the weaponization of the Department of Justice, and end the woke policies that continue to undermine our military.

Lastly, we will oppose any blank check for Ukraine in any supplemental appropri-

Paris...

continued from Page 4A

velopment Office at 706-439-6045. Their office is located at 46 Hughes Street here in Blairsville. The building is located on the hill across from the Pat Haralson Memorial Civic Center.

Fowler...

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you may expect something in return for your trouble. But if you serve God in your work, then it matters less if anyone acknowledges your effort. To serve the work is to work heartily for an audience of One.

"Work is not, primarily, a thing one does to live," Sayers writes, "but the thing one lives to do." When you live to serve God through your work, you will find meaning, contentment, and rest. That is the best reason to work.

Chamber...

continued from Page 4A

it has students from both Union and Towns County teaching as a Career. It is currently one of the fastest growing pathways. While we have recently taped the "Attendance Matters" video, we saw previous UCHS graduates employed at most of the businesses we visited. Union County Schools works side by side with North Georgia Tech, Young Harris College, and University of North Georgia to ensure students are prepared for the next level.

In many communities there is a shortage of teachers and staff. As it's not always easy to be an educator, please take time to say a word of encouragement to our teachers and administrators to thank them for their hard work.

It takes everyone to make Life Better in Blairsville.

Ripma...

continued from Page 4A

tions. In Atlanta, a local district attorney, Fani Willis, is coming after the former President as if she has never heard of innocent-until-proven-guilty. Is she a living example of the toxic bias that has infected our legal system?

I see Hunter Biden breaking the law with no consequences, and to half the country it is no big deal. Wasn't it Abraham Lincoln who said, "You can fool all people some of the time and some people all the time? But you can never fool all people all the time."

Are there enough informed citizens left in America to vote the bums who are causing this mess out of office? If there aren't, the foundations of justice we grew up with will soon crumble. And I think time may be running out!

John Ripma

Campbell...

continued from Page 4A

requesting consideration of possible tax breaks for seniors, but the School Board members' faces were defiant and smug. Most alarming was the chairman snidely calling all the attendees of the meeting "hearing impaired" simply because the people in the back of the crowded room asked them to please speak up. His attitude and remark was surprisingly rude and snarky and utterly unbecoming of an elected official.

Our exercise in "we the people" was fruitless, I'm afraid. The final decision is August 31 at 8 a.m.

Lisa Campbell

Rains...

continued from Page 4A

doctrination – and from the Pro-BLM protest that we had here I'm not convinced of that – I will support no tax hikes whatsoever.

If they do raise property taxes, they will have another problem on their hands. That problem will be me attending ALL of The Commissar's as well as the BOE's meetings, and I am very vocal and NOT a "Yes" Man.

Good Day and God Bless Y'all,
Claude Rains Jr.

tions bill.

Ultimately, we strongly believe that it's time to use the power of the purse to defund Joe Biden's reckless, woke, and bloated agenda. The stakes are too high to greenlight the Left's out-of-control spending and harmful policies, which is why we're prepared to hold the line yet again in our fight to cut spending and get our nation back on track for the American people. Please know that as a new and conservative member of the House Appropriations Committee, I look forward to helping lead this effort when we return to Washington in September.

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

are native and are at least moderately deer resistant. I think one of the reasons I like these plants is that they bloom at the end of summer when fall is approaching. To me these plants show the promise that fall is right around the corner. If you have questions about these plants contact your County Extension Office, or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.