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I was provided proof, all I could do would be to make noise and contact the city of my concerns. I have no control over the City of Blairsville, the Mayor, or the City Council whatsoever and I could not force them to stop taking the leachate water, because it is a legal process. Therefore, I have no authority to tell them how to conduct their business. The City of Blairsville is over the Wastewater Treatment Plant and while Lake Nottely is in Union County, it is owned and operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). I have zero input or control over this entire situation and apparently all of this process is completely legal and approved by the Georgia EPD as something the Wastewater Plant is fully capable of processing.

Q. How does this processed leachate impact Lake Nottely?

A. According to water samples that I was told about, it has not done anything negative to the lake, but I am told that those water samples will continually be taken and monitored.

Q. Is it true that over the years that this processed leachate will degrade the water quality of Lake Nottely?

A. The EPA is apparently

doing studies to determine what levels of PFAS chemicals are harmful to human health in both the short and long term. PFAS were not detected in Lake Nottely when testing was done in February 2020. If anyone determines that anything put into Lake Nottely is dangerous to human beings or fish, I suspect we will have lots of folks from all over flying in to check it out, including those most responsible, EPD, EPA, TVA and others.

Q. What can you do as commissioner?

A. I am keeping up with water quality testing and information that is provided to me from different sources. You can be assured that if I learn of actual damage being done to our lake, I will be the one yelling the loudest.

Q. We have heard that Senator Steve Gooch is involved in this process. Is he causing the problem?

A. Absolutely not. Senator Gooch is a partner in an environmental firm that operates and runs sewage processing plants. His contact was to ask the Mayor if the City had excess capacity to treat this leachate and did they have an interest in doing it. The City did and the Mayor and City Council freely voted to accept the

material for a monetary payment based on quantity. As I was told, there was no pressure put on anyone.

Q. Do you think the City or Senator Gooch would do anything to harm the water quality of Lake Nottely?

A. I certainly do not feel they would intentionally do anything negative to our lake or stream. I feel certain if either Senator Gooch or the City of Blairsville are convinced that this process is dangerous to the water quality of Lake Nottely, I believe they would immediately shut it down. Further, I feel they will be checking with any agency possible to see if there is any future problem with what they are doing.

Q. Is the City of Blairsville the only wastewater plant accepting leachate?

A. As I was told, absolutely not. There are landfills from cities, counties and private companies all over Georgia and the United States that process leachate. While I have no idea how many lakes and streams are impacted by the processing of leachate, I feel certain there are hundreds if not thousands throughout the country. If something is being done to harm any of those bodies of water, then I certainly hope that our Federal and State Government are working on a solution.

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range. This does not include the nearly \$100,000 obligated by the county for gun range design, presuming 75% of which will be reimbursed by the Georgia DNR, during a statewide deficit year. The county funds presumably came from one of the many "pots of money" that the Sole Commissioner previously spoke about. These costs, regardless of source, do not consider the long-term cost of operation, maintenance and liability of a gun range situated between two heavily-used Wilderness Areas, a Scenic Byway, and with Appalachian Trail located 1 mile downrange.

We all recognize the need for legitimate governmental expenditures, but the purchase of land for a "jail I hope we never build"; property because it "was a good deal" for some future unspecified use; and a redundant gun range located less than 4 miles from an under-utilized existing gun range, does not seem fiscally responsible in a deficit year. These are discretionary luxury items and non-essential to the operation of the county and provision of essential public services. The Sole Commissioner had previously stated at the onset of the "corona event" that the county was in good fiscal condition and had adequate reserves, as reported in the North Georgia News. The question is whether these are wise financial decisions to purchase lands for future unspecified uses and build a redundant gun range in an anticipated deficit year.

There was significant hot debate at the last "Public Hearing" over a multi-commissioner form of government. As it stands now, one person oversees the preparation, approval and adoption of a county budget and sets millage rates for 25,000 residents. There is no

"Commission" vote required. Many persons stated personal cases and raised objections. The Sole Commissioner clearly did not listen to voices of his constituents, but was only annoyed by them. He was so enraged that he threatened with Union County deputies to eject several persons from the meeting for challenging him. The Sole Commissioner was unmoved and combative and was bound to adopt his tax increase without consideration or revision based on public comments, which he then authorized himself to do.

One must question whether the County's 50% growth from 17,000 persons in 2000 to 25,000 persons today is of the magnitude and complexity that daily operations, fiscal management and planning have become greater demands than one person can reasonably be expected to manage, no matter how experienced and skilled they may be.

There was an item on the recent Republican primary ballot of whether the antiquated sole commissioner form of government should be retained in Union County. The item barely carried in terms of retaining the current form of government. No such item was on the Democratic ballot at that time. Only a handful of counties retain the Sole Commissioner. Having absolute power with the combination of executive and legislative powers in the hands of a single person is simply too much unilateral authority to be wielded. As stated in one county scheduled to change to a commissioner form of government next year: "Power corrupts; absolute power, absolutely corrupts." Perhaps it is time for a county referendum in Union County on this matter?

D. B. Swaim

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

the road soon transitioned to gravel and then to single track. We crossed a ridge and dropped into a deep cove. I switched my Ford truck into four-wheel drive. We began climbing up another ridge over the rutted road bed, and after coming into a gap we again dropped down into a cove and came to a deep mucky area. Beyond this area there were three high berms which prevented us from traveling any further. The app told us we were within a mile of our destination.

We backed up and turned around to travel the 7 miles back to the pavement. Halfway out we met a bear hunter on the single-track road. He moved by backing his new truck over a tree, allowing us to go by on the edge of the road and a 20-foot drop off a ledge. We inquired about Burrell's Ford Road and were given directions. We were also told that many GPS apps showed the road we were on going all the way through to our destination, but, the road was impassable. We were late, but, eventually we arrived at our destination.

Our group arrived at Burrell's Ford and began walking north on the Chattooga River Trail at 10:45 a.m. We arrived at in the vicinity of Ellicott's Rock at 12:05 p.m. The three of us were tired because we'd traveled 3.6 miles in 1 hour and 20 minutes. I was on a mission. I pulled off my boots and put on some water shoes. The cool water felt great as I began to explore the laurel-covered river banks. I was desperate to find the rock.

Search as I would, I found no rock with letters

carved in it. Tom walked to the north and walked back south. But, still we did not find the rock. We climbed out of the river and sat down to lunch and discussed what we should do.

It was plain to us that the state line was another 150-200 yards north of us. So, away we went, and soon Shawn found a tree with a tag which read "South Carolina." Also, there was a red string tied to the tree and it had an arrow carved into the trunk of the tree. The arrow pointed down a steep bank, and underneath the arrow the word "rock" was carved into the tree. I scrambled down the bank and, 15 feet later, there was Ellicott's Rock. The initials "N" and "G" were carved into the rock. Two hundred and nine years ago, Ellicott carved these letters, and the states still disagree on the outcome. If Georgia had won the original dispute the state line would extend about a mile further north than it currently does today. Another "if" would be that Georgia would have Tennessee River frontage close to Chattanooga and water rights to that body of water. Andrew Ellicott is a name almost lost in history. However, his work had major implications on the history of our area.

The area around Ellicott's Rock is pristine and beautiful. Just walking through the area is worth the effort. But, couple that with the historical significance of the area, and you can really have a most enjoyable day. For more information on Walton's War, please see the article "The Walton War" written by Jonathan Martin or "The Walton War" on aboutnorthgeorgia.com.

Chamber...

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about Union County but are truly invested in its economic and environmental health. Commissioner Paris, Mayor Conley and the City Council work tirelessly to ensure our community maintains the character and quality of life we all enjoy, striving every day to do what's best as they safely maintain the natural beauty of our mountains and lakes. It must be noted that leaders such as these are a large part of the reason why we enjoy economic stability during a time when other areas are experiencing downturn. Due to sound decisions of local leadership, contractors here find themselves booked 12 months out. Our children can consider a career in Blairsville-Union County rather than feel forced to make the move to more populated areas to provide for their families. It is because they care about Blairsville, its citizens and the visitors who grace us, that our leaders make mindful decisions that recognize the impact on an entire community. Our leaders recognize they are not making decisions for strangers, rather they are making decisions for a community of friends and families, people they work alongside and sit beside at church.

When Michelle and I moved here, I modeled my life after a page from my father-in-law's book who said that if you treat people the way you want to be treated you will never go wrong. This simple truth embodies the mindset of the small community in which we live and the integrity of those who lead us.

As new residents join us here in the mountains, we'll embrace the depth of insight they bring, and trust they'll enjoy the very elements that brought them here.

We thank God we can call Blairsville home and are grateful to those who lead us.

Fowler...

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this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2).

Would you trust God to transform your will and desires? Can you say with Oswald Chambers, "I am determined to be absolutely and entirely for Him and for Him alone" ("My Utmost for His Highest")? Does your life declare, "Not Thy will but mine" or "Not my will but Thine"?

Williams...

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if you're putting out legumes. Allow the cover crop to grow throughout the winter. Depending on the cover crop that you use, you may need to add some fertilizer. Two to three weeks before planting your summer plants, you'll need to terminate the cover crop by cutting it and tilling it into the soil.

If you have questions about cover crops contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Fire...

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National Preparedness Month and how to be prepared, visit www.ready.gov/september.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~