

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Start When They Are Young

As we continue with National Preparedness Month, we are moving into week three's theme which is, "Teach Youth to Prepare for Disasters". We have already discussed the themes for week one, "Save Early for Disaster Costs" and week two, "Make a Plan to Prepare for Disasters". During week three, September 15th through the 21st, our preparedness focus should be on how to prepare our children for emergencies and disasters.

The Department of Homeland Security's website, www.ready.gov, provides a great deal of information to help people be prepared for disasters. The site also has guidelines for each week of National Preparedness Month just in case you missed weeks one or two. This year's theme is "Prepared, Not Scared."

The theme for 2019 is perfect when considering preparing our children for disasters. Prepared, not scared is exactly what we want for our children during a disaster. When an emergency or disaster happens, children often do not know what is happening or what to do. Teaching our children what disasters are; what to do during a disaster and how to prepare will reduce the anxiety caused by such events. These things should be taught early and before the disaster strikes.

When you are preparing for disasters, and we hope you are, involve the children so that they will understand what you are doing and why. Discuss the emergency plan and provide a role for each child so that they feel empowered and involved. Discuss what supplies that the children would want to bring if evacuation is needed.

Go through the Emergency Go Kit periodically with your children in order for them to know what is in the kit. Children can build a personal Go Kit with items they feel they may need. Ask the children which board games and toys they would want if they were to stay at home without power for an extended time. Fire safety is important to teach children. If the power is out, we prefer that people use flashlights or other battery-powered lights, instead of candles. However, if you must use candles, place candles in safe holders away from anything that could catch fire.

As we have stated before, disaster preparedness is everyone's responsibility. We should involve our children as much as possible. Educating them on disasters and providing them with the skills to

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Not Shaken

What shakes your world? What would cause you to put the phone down and say, "My life will never be the same again?" Current events force the question.

Rosie Granados was chatting on the phone with her twin sister Mary, who was near the end of her mail route. Suddenly, Mary screamed and went silent. Rosie later learned that her sister was one of the shooting victims in Midland, Texas. The deranged shooter killed Mary for her USPS van.

The Angels-Rangers baseball game was without music and the usual promotions. Angels pitcher Tyler Skaggs had unexpectedly died in his hotel room in the Dallas area just before the start of the series. His family said, "We are heartbroken to learn that the passing of our beloved Tyler was the result of a combination of dangerous drugs and alcohol." His wife Carli is now a young widow.

At the time of writing, Hurricane Dorian is a Category 5 storm battering the Bahamas. As it creeps westward, it intensifies its destruction of the islands in its path. It is too soon to tell what the damage is, and forecasters cannot predict where or even if the U.S. will sustain a direct hit.

Crime, drugs, and natural disasters are only the start of a list of things that can shake you. What about divorce or broken relationships? Loss of job or financial struggles? Depression, cancer, or other health issues? Death of a loved one? Pervasive loneliness or lack of direction?

To that personal list, we can add national issues. Since 1980, the U.S. federal debt per person has grown from \$10,000 to \$65,000. Religious liberty is American's first freedom, but it's now politically correct to subordinate it to the rabid hedonism of our day. National security threats always lurk nearby.

Yet there is hope. The Lord is near! "I have set the Lord continually before me. Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad" (Psa. 16:8-9). Though your world convulses with rage, fire, disease, calamity, and death, these need not shake you.

The anger of God shakes the earth (Psa. 18:7). But that only makes you yearn for a different place, a city of purity and

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. Are you pleased with the growth we've seen the county experience over the past couple of years?

A. While we went through so many years of practically no growth, yes it is good to see steady growth in our county. We do not want a county that doesn't have any growth, then we become stagnant. There is always the issue of too much growth and how much is the right amount and can you even control growth. All of these are important questions and most do not have good answers. We continue to work on looking out for problems with this new growth so that we may be proactive, and always do what is best for Union County.

Q. When are the Union County Commissioner's meetings held?

A. The official county meeting is on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Union County Courthouse. The meeting is held each month so that the citizens of the county know what is going on in the county. Occasionally we will have to reschedule a county meeting but that is usually only twice a year. A notice will be published in the North Georgia News and a notice will be posted to the doors of the courthouse for any changes necessary.

Q. I would like to come to a county meeting. Do they last a long time?

A. Typically you can plan for about 45 minutes. If there is a lot of county business to discuss they may last a little longer, but usually 30 to 45 minutes is max. We appreciate and encourage the county residents to come and keep up with what is happening in our beautiful county.

Q. May we ask questions at the meetings? The county I lived in before you had to call in prior to the meeting and be placed on the agenda, and there was a very short time limit.

A. Our county meetings have an agenda, and are conducted in an orderly fashion. First we go over any business from the previous month and decisions that have been made. Once the business section of the meeting is over, we open the meeting for questions and comments. You may ask as many questions as you like. If there is a controversial item up for discussion we may have

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Substance Use and Comorbidity

Comorbidity describes two or more disorders or illnesses occurring in the same person. They can occur at the same time or one after the other. Comorbidity also implies interactions between the illnesses that can worsen the course of both.

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.

Addiction changes the brain in fundamental ways, changing a person's normal needs and desires and replacing them with new priorities connected with seeking and using the drug. This results in compulsive behaviors that weaken the ability to control impulses, despite the negative consequences, and are similar to hallmarks of other mental illnesses.

Many people who have a substance use disorder also develop other mental illnesses, just as many people who are diagnosed with mental illness are often diagnosed with a substance use disorder. For example, about half of people who

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Chamber of Commerce

It's been a particularly cool, crisp week in Blairsville! With the steady, comfortable breeze and lower temperatures as we make our way into September, the first beginnings of fall are upon us. We have a busy and exciting season coming up here at the Chamber, with plenty of opportunities to be involved.

On October 3rd we are hosting our annual Buy Local Extravaganza at North Georgia Tech College.

Last year, we had roughly 750 patrons in attendance and over 70 vendors! On October 23rd, we are hosting the fall Power Lunch at the Union County Community Center. Our speaker will be Chris Clark, the president of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce. This is a great chance to eat a good lunch, network with other local business owners, and hear from a talented speaker. For both events, you can learn more and register online at VisitBlairsvilleGA.com, or by calling the Chamber at 877-745-5789.

Anna Dyer, our graphics and communication

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

BPD Says Thank You

Dear Residents, Business Owners and Visitors of the Blairsville-Union County Community,

On behalf of the employees of the Blairsville Police Department, I would like to say thank you for making the First Annual Blairsville Shop with a Cop Duck Derby such a great and memorable event. This letter gives me great pride to express how grateful and appreciative we are to serve the supportive community we work and live in.

The Shop with a Cop Program will be celebrating its 19th anniversary this year, and over a thousand children have been able to have a Christmas thanks to supporters like you.

I would like to recognize the following businesses that donated prizes for the event: Butternut Creek Golf Course, Chick-fil-A, Freeman Gas, G & G Bakery, High Country Tire, Home Depot, Melissa's Custom Cakes, Mike's Seafood and Grill, Old Union Golf Course, Save-A-Lot, SWBC Mortgage Company, The View Grill, United Community Bank, Walmart, Ware Chevrolet, and the Wine Shoppe.

And thanks to King Ford, Buck Dills, Tony Hamby and Lance Law Firm, the four cash prize winners of the First Annual Duck Derby, for generously donating their prize money back to Shop with a Cop.

Regards,
Michael J. Baxter
Chief of Police, Blairsville Police Dept.

Proposal or Decree?

Dear Editor,
It's not good enough for the government to be the judge of its own actions. In fact, it's not a whole lot different than me saying everything I do is fine, or you doing the same regarding your own actions if we were in the wrong. So, what sense can it possibly make to have the government come up with its own rules, regulations and guidelines before proposing a controversial project, then claiming against each objection that it's acting within its own guidelines? Take the proposed gun range to be built on national forest land. To several objections, the Forest Service officials just smugly answered in effect that whether YOU think it's wrong or not doesn't matter as long as it meets the "requirements" of, say, the "Chattahoochee-Oconee Forest Plan" or the "Environmental Assessment." Well, who cares if it does? Who of us had ANY say whatsoever in what either of those two documents say? Do we even know what they say? Where's the democracy in this process?

This gun range proposal has been corrupt
See Lance, page 5A

Prescribed Fire Council

In September each year since 2007, the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council has held its annual meeting in Tifton where 300 or so firefighters, landowners, consultants and others who use prescribed fire to manage their forests gather to share experiences and learn about new techniques for managing fire in their woodlands.

Fire is a natural phenomenon that has occurred in our forests since the beginning of time and maintains a natural balance in the environment. Some of our well-intentioned ancestors decided that they knew better how to maintain the environment than mother nature, so they created programs to extinguish all fires in the forest. Smokey Bear was the main culprit and used to say, "Only YOU can prevent Forest Fires!" and our firefighters worked hard to extinguish all fires in the forest which has led to build up of fuels that contributes to the out of control wildfires that we have today. Only recently has Smokey Bear changed his motto to "Only YOU can prevent Wildfires!" and now promotes the use of intentionally set fire to get the forests back the way nature intended it to be.

In some areas such as parts of California changing the message is too late and now with the build-up of years of fuels, they are experiencing the largest, hottest, longest, and most expensive wildfires in history. The Georgia Prescribed Fire Council members promote the wise use of planned and controlled fire to get our forests back in line with the way nature intended it to be. The mission of the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council is: To protect the right, to encourage the use of, and to promote public understanding of prescribed fire.

Prescribed fires are used by such a variety of individuals, agencies, and organizations throughout the state that the Southwest Georgia Prescribed Fire Council was established in 2002 in a regional effort to encourage the exchange of information, techniques, and experience among practitioners.

In January of 2007, the steering committee, working with all partners, decided to expand and become the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council. This platform allows the council to be engaged in prescribed fire advocacy across the state. Forest lands constitute significant economic, biological and aesthetic resources of statewide importance. Frequent fires, set by lightning strikes and Native Americans, have shaped Georgia's ecosystems for thousands of years.

Our forest ecosystems evolved with fire and continue to need the strategic application of
See Riley, page 5A

RC&D Executive Director
Frank Riley



Muscadines...

...Applesauce Cake and Buckeyes - September has always been my favorite month of the year. It is the month when the nights begin to cool and the acorns begin to fall. When I was a little chap, my grandmother would take me on rambling trips through the woods looking for wild muscadines. We would begin late in the morning after the chores were done. We would visit the bluffs and creek bottoms and pick a bucket or two by lunchtime. For lunch, my grandmother would build a fire under the bluff and boil the eggs she had packed. For dessert, we would eat fresh muscadines. Afterward, we would walk down to the spring and drink our fill of fresh water. Sometimes we would climb up to a ledge overlooking Turkey Creek, where she would tell me stories about her Cherokee mother and plants that grew wild in the woods.

Around the 10th of September, we would wander the woods looking for Buckeye Trees. We could always count on the buckeyes falling from the trees around September 10th. We liked picking them up, but we had to be quick because the squirrels liked to eat them. Granny would always remind me that Uncle Freeman carried a buckeye in his pocket while he fished. If he needed some good luck, he would reach into his pocket and rub the buckeye. I would always come back from the woods with a pocket full of buckeyes because I wanted to be as good a fisherman as Uncle Freeman.

Granny also enjoyed baking an Applesauce Cake for me on my birthday. I was born on September 9, 1958. I can't remember any store-bought gifts from my Granny. But, I remember each year I could look forward to an Applesauce Cake. Even after I went off to college, on my birthday, I would receive a card telling me an Applesauce Cake would be ready to eat when I came home.

These little notes came periodically throughout the year. At least once a month, Granny would send me a note telling me about the latest news from the farm. She would always insert a \$20 bill and end the note by telling me not to tell Papa. Believe me, that money was always appreciated. So, I think you can understand why I have always enjoyed the month of September. Nowadays, I am still enjoying September, and I am still making new traditions to enjoy.

For example, a couple of weeks ago I received a message from a young man who was a friend and former 4-H Club Member from Union County. Evan Browning graduated a year and a half ago from UCHS and joined the U.S.
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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Tall Fescue

I wrote about tall fescue a few weeks ago, but since the time for planting it is about here, I wanted to talk about it a little more.

Fescue is commonly used for pastures and lawn in our climate because it is able to handle the cold well. Fescue is a cool season grass, which means that it does best in the spring and fall once the weather has cooled off. Fescue does not do as well in the summer because it doesn't like the heat. In May this year some of the fescue suffered because we had three weeks with no rain and temperatures in the 90s. Some folks' lawns developed brown patches after that, but I expect that in most of those situations the fescue will be able to grow back out this fall and winter.

Because fescue is a perennial cool season grass, it's best to plant it in mid-September. It can be planted from seed, not sod. Fescue also has good drought resistance because it has deep roots. The deep roots allow it to pull up nutrients and moisture from deeper in the soil profile. Fescue is one of the most shade tolerant grasses out there. That makes it good for our area because of all the trees.

Fescue does best if it's cut at three or more inches. That means that it won't be trim like the Masters in Augusta, but it's best for the plant. The same goes for pasture that's being grazed. There is a saying that, 'Grass grows grass.' Meaning that if you want a hay crop or pasture to grow out, there needs to be some grass left for it to grow from. If the grass is cut or grazed too low, fescue will struggle and not be able to grow out as well.

Low pH is a common challenge when trying to grow grass, especially if it's a space that was recently covered by trees. A soil test will tell you what the pH of your soil is and how much lime is needed to adjust it. An ideal pH for growing grass is 6 - 6.5. It's best to add lime before planting grass because lime can take 3-6 months before it's fully effective.

There are a couple of other grass options for lawns in our area besides fescue, but fescue is often the easiest. Zoysiagrass can be done as well, but it must be grown from sod for most varieties. There is a variety of centipede grass called Tifblair centipedegrass that is also adapted to our climate. Zoysiagrass and centipedegrass would need to be planted in the spring because they are warm season grasses.

If you have questions about tall fescue in pasture or lawn contact your County Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.
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Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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