

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Wildland Fire Prevention

Recently I attended a class concerning wildland firefighting. The class was called Command and Control of Wildland Urban Interface Fire Operations for the Structural Chief Officer. That is a mouth full. Basically, the class is about how to plan for and command wildland fires that involve or that is near built upon areas. These are fires that can happen in our area.

When people hear about wildland fires and homes destroyed because of them, they think of the western states such as California. They see the wall of fire moving towards a home and later see that home destroyed. Most did not believe that fires such as these could occur in the

eastern US. Some of that thinking changed after the Gatlinburg fire in 2016 which resulted in 14 deaths, over 200 injuries, and destroyed nearly 2,500 homes and businesses in that area.

There are many factors that can contribute to a wildland fire of this type such as a drought, vegetation type, high winds, or low relative humidity. However, homes can be at risk from a wildland fire at any location where homes or businesses are built in close proximity to natural vegetation such as shrubs and trees. That is why we recommend that homeowners prepare their home and the space around their home to reduce the risk of home ignition from a wildland fire.

Most homes that are victims of wildland fires are due to flying embers called firebrands. An "ember" refers to any small, hot, carbonaceous particle. A "firebrand" is essentially an ember which is airborne and carried for some distance in the air.

These firebrands land on or near the home and ignite dry, flammable materials. These flammable materials include leaves next to the home; landscaping bark; landscaping vegetation; trash; and any other dry material near the home. Firebrands may also be blown into attics through vents. Once these small firebrands ignite the materials, they create a larger fire that eventually can ignite the home. Homeowners should evaluate their home and determine if they have such danger areas where firebrands could potentially ignite their home.

Wildland firefighting and risk reduction involves a partnership between the fire service and the homeowner. There are best

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Finding Happiness

British pop singer Adele says her latest album is for her 9-year-old son. She wants him to understand "who I am and why I voluntarily chose to dismantle his entire life in the pursuit of my own happiness." The three years making it was a "self-reflection and then sort of self-redemption."

That's pitiful. No, it's tragic. She has internalized the pop psychology once expressed as "be true to yourself" and "follow your heart." Those are now the cultural doctrines and virtue signals of self-fulfillment, self-love, and psychological self-expression. But how is that pursuit of happiness virtuous when it requires someone else to lose theirs? Whatever happened to the virtue of self-sacrifice?

Jesus told us what it means to be a contented human being when he said the greatest commands are to love God and love your neighbor. In "Mere Christianity," C. S. Lewis writes, "The happiness which God designs for His higher creatures is the happiness of being freely, voluntarily united to Him and to each other in an ecstasy of love and delight compared with which the most rapturous love between a man and a woman on this earth is mere milk and water."

God fashioned humans to find joy in relationship with Him and in imitation of His self-sacrifice. Yet humans think they can "invent some sort of happiness for themselves outside God. And out of that hopeless attempt has come nearly all that we call human history—money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery—the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy" (Lewis again).

You need not spend years in self-reflection plotting your self-redemption. You'll not find what you seek rummaging through dusty bins in moldy corners seeking the treasure that could be yours by an outstretched faith and heavenward gaze. "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psa. 37:4).

May the God of hope fill you (and Adele's child and his parents) with all joy and peace in believing in Christ Jesus (Rom 15:13).

mountainchristian@brmemc.net

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

The sometimes brutal cold temperatures we see in the north Georgia mountains impacts our domesticated animals in different ways. Many factors enter into whether our pets are safe when the temperatures dip into the very low 10 and 20 degrees. This week's questions and answers address some of the issues to consider as we go into these cold Winter months.

Q. What is a good temperature to use as a benchmark for pet safety in the winter?

A. A dog's normal body temperature is anywhere from 99.5 to 102.5°F. In general, cold temperatures should not become a problem for most dogs until temperatures fall below 45° F, at which point some cold-averse dogs might begin to feel uncomfortable. When temperatures fall below 32° F, owners of small breed dogs, dogs with thin coats, and/or very young, old or sick dogs should pay close attention to their pet's well-being. Once temperatures drop under 20° F, all owners need to be aware that their dogs could potentially develop cold-associated health problems like hypothermia and frostbite.

Q. What factors should I consider when allowing my pets to go outside in cold weather?

A. Coat type – Dogs with thick, double-layered coats tend to be the most cold-tolerant (think Siberian Huskies, Newfoundlands or Samoyeds). On the other hand, dogs who have exceptionally thin coats (e.g., Greyhounds and Xoloitzcuintli) suffer the most in cold weather. Coat color – On a clear day, black, brown, or other dark-coated dogs can absorb significant amounts of heat from sunlight, keeping them warmer in comparison to their light-colored brethren. Size – Small dogs have a larger surface area to volume ratio. Therefore, small dogs get colder more readily than do large dogs ... all other things being equal. Weight – Body fat is a good insulator. Thinner dogs tend to get colder quicker than do their heftier counterparts. Conditioning – We've all experienced this one. Fifty degrees feels quite chilly in October, but after a long, cold winter, a 50-degree day in April can make us break out the shorts and T-shirts. Dogs who are used to cold temperatures handle them much better than do pets who aren't. Age and Health – The very young, the very old, and the sick are not as able

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



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Habitat for Humanity

Welcome to November! Time flies. Where did summer go? Before you know it, the Holidays will be upon us.

There are many exciting things happening at Habitat for Humanity, Towns/Union Counties, Inc. In last week's column, I told you that Habitat is in the process of selecting our next homeowner, for the house that we will soon be building on Gumlog Road.

Just as a reminder, anyone who might like information on becoming a Habitat Homeowner needs to come to one of four orientation sessions, to learn all about what it takes to be selected for a Habitat Home. Those orientations are on Nov. 11 at 7 p.m. or Nov. 13 at 10 a.m. at the First Baptist Church in Blairsville. The other two orientations are on Nov. 6 at 10 a.m., or Nov. 9 at 7 p.m. at the Hiwassee Civic Center. We need to know how many people will be coming, so if you are interested, please call 706-745-7101 to register for one of those free

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Habitat Happenings

Cathy Wheeler



Letters to the Editor

Spot the Difference

Dear Editor,
Here in North Georgia, most of us know that some people get their news from the liberal media. We also know those people (at least the Liberal Democrats) are seriously uninformed and duped into thinking that MSNBC is a legitimate news source.

If you are one of the people who watch MSNBC, this letter is not meant to offend you, it is meant to convince you that MSNBC does not give its viewers all the news.

Headlines from MSNBC.com on Tuesday, Oct. 26: When Trump screams, it gets scary; Omarosa opens up about Trump White House; Couldn't happen to a nicer bunch: The Charlottesville Nazis are representing themselves in court; Ex-military and police reportedly helped plan Jan. 6 in D.C. "war room"; New report investigates Manchin's coal ties as he haggles over Build Back Better plan; FDA advisers endorse Pfizer's Covid vaccine for kids aged 5-11; Deficit shrinks in first year of Joe Biden's presidency; Trump keeps asking Biden to hide Jan.

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Sewer Service

Dear Editor,
Nothing quite caught my attention in the Oct. 20 issue of the North Georgia News more than the letter to the editor stating that the City of Blairsville is moving forward with an application grant to extend sewer service. This announcement follows the approval by EPD who reissued the discharge permit for the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant (WTP) from 400,000 to 1 million gallons per day, even though the 2021 average summer daily discharge was well below the previous limit of 400K gal/day.

The extended sewer service is exactly what the Sole County Commissioner implied he needed before he could approve the development of large multi-family projects. These activities were expected. It's OK for the City and County to grow and develop, but how it grows requires careful planning and preparation, transparency and trust — and a professional environmental impact assessment.

It will be years before these projects are completed; however, this sewer expansion and the expected development projects will create a significant increase in WTP discharge that will most certainly impact the quality of water in Butternut Creek, that runs through the heart of Meeks Park, and the South end of Lake Nottely. These waters already have a history of bacterial and chemical issues. A sharp increase in WTP discharge may be sufficient to push these waters

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Letters to the Editor

Final Reflection from Hamilton Gardens

Dear Editor,
During the 2020 pandemic lockdown, we took the time to reflect on the work and challenges at Hamilton Gardens, beginning with our start in 2016. There were six "Reflection" articles published. It seems appropriate to publish the final reflection as a letter to the editor as we prepare to close this chapter of an incredible garden journey of joy and achievement.

From the beginning five years ago, we have worked to bring a sad and neglected garden back from the edge of utter devastation to a place of beauty and significance in the northeast Georgia mountains.

It has been an amazing run, and we are proud of our many accomplishments and, most importantly, of being true to our mission "to restore, preserve, and enhance this botanical legacy garden for the education and enjoyment of all who visit."

A big part of our strategy has been to build community for the Gardens, not just on the local level, but nationally as well. The statistics we collected in 2021 show that we have been very successful, as we recorded visitors from 37 states and nine countries.

Our five separate groups of volunteers have supported the Gardens from day one and continued to do so until our last work day in October.

We operated our organization as a business, complete with a vision, mission and five-year strategic plan, which drove our efforts. It was not enough. The nonprofit corporation, Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge Inc., was unable to secure a sustainable leasehold agreement; a path to a future which would have allowed us to remain as stewards of the property.

Our efforts were always focused on the Gardens, not building political capitol, and so our story is over and we are dissolving the corporation. A lack of vision and leadership were the determining factors in decisions made regarding the fate of the Gardens.

What will the Gardens look like in a year? They will still be there, but they face an uncertain future as to how will they be managed, and will our work be continued? Promises made are not always promises kept.

Ansel Adams said it best: "Let us leave a splendid legacy for our children ... let us turn to them and say, 'This you inherit: guard it well, for it is far more precious than money ... and once destroyed, nature's beauty cannot be repurchased at any price.'"

Grace Howard
Executive Director, Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge, Inc.

Prohibition Days

I enjoy spending time with Sheldon Henderson and Milton Bradley. They let me tag along with them on grouse hunting trips. There are few grouse left in these mountains, but, Sheldon and Milton have some really good dogs that I enjoy watching. Even better than hunting are the stories Sheldon tells of his ancestors and his childhood. He and Joan Bilbo have written a couple of books about their ancestors and these mountains that you would enjoy. One such story is about a group of ladies which decided to do something about the abundance of illegal whiskey being made in the area.

Sometime during the 1930s, several women in a local community decided to do something about the illegal making of whiskey. They were tired of their husbands and other men of the community wasting their money and lives on moonshine. So, a group of these ladies decided to go and smash up the still of a man they knew well. They knew him because he was a Sunday School Superintendent in a local church. For some time, the ladies had watched in disgust as he led Sunday School knowing what he was selling to their husbands. They tried in vain to persuade him to quit the illegal manufacture of the evil spirits. But, he refused to quit.

The business was just too good, and he stated that his family needed the money to pay the bills. Nor could he find anything in the scriptures which prohibited him from making "shine." This discussion went on for months to no avail. So, the group of ladies gathered at Mrs. Mamie's house and began the 25-minute walk to the home of their Sunday School Superintendent. Just before his house, the group of five ladies turned south and walked up a branch into a cove. The cove led up toward the top of Ivy Log Mountain. The ladies didn't try to hide their approach. They were on a mission and didn't care who knew. They had to wade through an ivy thicket, breaking many limbs which tore at their coats. Finally, they emerged at a springhead. There was their superintendent running his operation. Instead of standing his ground or fighting, he lit out in a dead run. The ladies chopped up and smashed the still. Thereafter, the Sunday School Superintendent never made any more evil spirits.

Charles Jenkins once told me the following story about one of his ancestors. Ransy was one of the local Revenue Agents. His territory covered Towns and Union counties, and his adventures in preventing the illegal manufacture of whiskey were many. One day, Ransy received

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Moles and Voles

Moles and voles can be very damaging to your yard. Moles can dig up long tunnels through your yard, and voles make a meal out of the plant roots. This can leave your yard with a lumpy look and wilted dying plants. The key to treating these issues is figuring out whether you have moles or voles in your yard.

Understanding some of the differences between moles and voles is important to decide how to treat them.

Technically speaking voles are rodents, but moles are not. Moles are carnivorous animals that eat insects and grubs that they find underground. If you look at a picture of a mole they have very large front feet. They're able to use these big, meaty claws to 'swim' through the soil creating the tunnels in your yard. They are looking for insects to eat in the soil. They won't eat the roots of plants, as those aren't in the diet.

Voles are smaller in size than a mole, looking similar to a mouse. The easiest way to tell the difference between a vole and a mouse is that a mouse's tail is about the same length as its body. A vole has a much shorter tail. Voles are herbivores, meaning that they feed on plants. Bulb plants are often a particular favorite of voles. Voles have much smaller front paws than moles do. This means that voles are not nearly as adept at digging tunnels through the ground. Voles will often use tunnels that have been left behind by moles.

Because moles and voles have different diets and behavior they must be treated differently for control. There are a couple of different methods for mole control. The first one is to use a granular insecticide to get rid of all the insects and grubs in your yard. Once the food source is removed the moles will move on to find a new food source. A second way of removing moles is by placing a trap in their main tunnel. Go out into your yard and tamp down all the tunnels that you can find. Wherever the ground has popped back up the next day is the main tunnel. Repeated trapping may be necessary because a single yard could be host to several moles. Some of the grubs that moles eat, such as earthworms, are a sign of healthy soil. Moles also like moist soil because it is easier for digging. This means that if you do a good job taking care of your garden you will also inadvertently be encouraging moles to tunnel!

Voles can also be trapped. Place a mouse trap with peanut butter near an active site to catch the voles. If you are able to get rid of the moles in your yard oftentimes the voles will

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Chamber of Commerce

It's Election Day! I hope everyone has had an opportunity to vote, but if not, there is still maybe time if you are reading this Tuesday. While the Chamber is non-political we still encourage everyone to get out and vote. Do your research, ask questions and make an informed decision. Be sure to search all sides of an issue. The good thing about living in Blairsville-Union County is our local officials will take the time to meet with you, prove information, and answer your questions so you can make the best decision.

You don't want to miss Eggs & Issues with Insurance Commissioner John King on Nov. 10. Have you ever had a question about how your insurance rates are calculated, or simply have a question about your insurance policies? Commissioner King will let us in on what's new and how to get in touch with the Customer Service Division and the newly revamped online options. You don't want to miss

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to regulate their body temperatures in comparison to healthy dogs in the prime of their lives, and they therefore need greater protection from the cold.

Q. How can I tell if my pet is too cold?

A. The great rule to follow should always be: When in doubt, keep your dog indoors. The last thing you want to do is put your precious pet in danger of getting frostbite or hypothermia. Depending on the severity, symptoms of hypothermia can include: Weakness, shivering, inaudible heartbeat, and trouble breathing. If your pet experiences any of these symptoms after being out in the cold, it's important that you give your vet a call right away. Keep your pet in a warm area and cover them with warm blankets/towels (avoid using heating pads, as these can burn your pet). Then take your dog to the vet as soon as possible.

Q. Who do we call when we see animals in danger?

A. If you see an animal that you feel is in danger or is sick, you should call Animal Control at 706-439-6052. However, if you simply see a stray animal, there are several rescue groups in Union County. Here are a few: The Mountain Shelter Humane Society (706-781-3843), Castoff Pet Rescue (706 487-4539), Valley River Humane Society (828-837-2304) and the Whiskers Project (888-872-9330). There may be a few more scattered throughout north Georgia. Animal Control often receives calls about dogs left outside in dog houses during the cold winter

months. Please keep in mind that many households provide heaters and heating blankets in their dog houses. It may appear that an animal is left to the cold elements when in reality, they have access to a warm dog-house.

Q. Should I report any unidentified animal that I find in my yard?

A. Please remember that just because you see an animal running around without a collar, does not mean that they are strays. There are many community dogs and cats as well and there are some that simply roam from their home temporarily and then return home.

Q. How many animals did the Union County Animal Control work with in 2020?

A1. Josh Bridges with the Union County Animal Control reports the following 2020 data: Animal Control calls – 1083; Animals adopted out – 63; Animals Euthanized – 12; Animals reclaimed by owner – 18; Bite Cases – 27.

A2. Additionally, the Mountain Shelter Humane Society reports the following 2020 data: Animal Intake - 411; Cats - 216; Dogs - 195; Animal Adoptions - 425; Return to Owner - 5; Medical Euthanasia's - 2.

Thank you to Union County Animal Control, Mountain Shelter Humane Society, petmd.com and intermountain-pet.com for contributions to these questions and answers. We are very appreciative of all the animal/pet organizations that help us to keep our pets safe in Union County.

Habitat... continued from Page 4A

informational meetings.

Here at Habitat, we are very connected with our local communities. The Holiday Season can be especially hard for many in our area. During the entire month of November, everyone can bring canned goods and other non-perishable foods to our ReStore, and we will make sure all of it gets taken to the food pantries in both Union and Towns Counties. Your donations will help families in our area get enough food so that they don't have to worry about being hungry.

One of the things our ReStore does every year is hold an appreciation breakfast for our local Veterans on Veterans Day, Nov. 11. On that Thursday, from 9 a.m.-noon, we will have coffee and goodies here at our ReStore to honor those who have served.

We also like to do something nice for some of our active-duty servicemen and women, who are stationed

overseas, and won't be home for the holidays. We will be collecting Christmas cards to send to them! So, if you have a few extra cards laying around, please consider writing a nice note inside, thanking a service-person for their sacrifice, and dropping those cards off at the Habitat ReStore by Nov. 19, in order to give us time to box up all the cards and mail them overseas. Your participation in this project is very much appreciated by the servicemen and women who receive these cards.

By the time you are reading this, all the scarecrows that were on the square will be in the process of being taken down. However, the winners aren't chosen yet! Go to Facebook and go to the page called Scarecrowville, to see the pictures of all the scarecrows, and "like" your favorites. The businesses who put up the scarecrows with the most "likes" will be awarded some great prizes!

Have a great week!

Ripma... continued from Page 4A

6 materials. The White House keeps saying no; GOP lawyer changes his mind about whether the GOP is a 'lost cause'; Like Trump, DeSantis uses Black face to mask his Covid failures; GOP Senate hopeful calls for 'shut down' of public schools; America has written off the GOP as a serious party; Oh, good, Texas Republicans found yet another way to empower the white vote; Police and school officials refuse to see Black children as children; Mitch McConnell just killed the voting rights bill – maybe for the last time.

I can go on, but let's look at sample headlines that Newsmax and Foxnews think are relevant: Sen. Cruz Won't Delay Confirmation for Bidens' Ambassador to China; Wall Street Hits Record but Facebook Caps Gains; Raytheon Warns of Worker Losses as Companies Impose Vaccine Mandate; Loudoun County students WALK OUT of class after judge sides

with dad in bathroom sexual assault case; Adam Schiff reveals regret about Russian collusion probe; Dems desperate on Biden spending bill; Violent shoplifting incidents on the rise in large cities; Merrick Garland grilled over federal assets involved in Jan. 6th riot.

Can you see a difference? Conservative media deal with a broad range of real issues, and I didn't even mention the border crisis, inflation or the alarming murder rate in every large Democratic city. I'm not saying Foxnews or Newsmax is perfect and unbiased, but they do present a relatively balanced perspective (actual news versus political commentary) compared to the liberal media. Our Democrat neighbors could be voting on crucial issues impacting the future of our country, yet they are ignorant of the crucial facts. This is what is scary, not Trump ranting about his own White House.

John Ripma

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

a tip regarding a man he had been trying to arrest for a long time. The man had alluded him for a long time and was a notorious moonshiner. Ransy and his crew went to the place, and sure enough, there was old John and his four partners.

The crew of revenue agents spread out to form a circle around the moonshiners. It was late in the evening, and the men had just finished an evening meal. They were enjoying a nice campfire and had begun to pass the jug. They were a long way up above Owl Creek in a cove just at the head of a spring. Ransy thought to himself, "These boys think they are safe from the law." The revenue agents were just about to spring their trap when one man said, "John, I wonder what old Ransy would do if you called him and told him where we are. Do you think he could find us?" Their leader stood and staggered up to a hickory tree with a big knot hole and broke off a limb. He began to wind the limb as if he were cranking an old telephone.

John looked around to his men and told them the phone was a ringing. He grinned and spoke into the knot hole of the Hickory, "Ransy, this is John. You have been trying to catch me for years, and I want you to know I am in a cove just above Owl Creek. Come up and try to find me." With that he dropped his imaginary hand crank and staggered back to the campfire to sit down.

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

also leave because they can't do a good job of digging their own tunnels. If you're unsure if you have voles or moles take a slice of apple and tie a piece of string around it. Place it in the hole and let it sit for a couple of days. When you pull it back out, if the apple is gone you have voles (herbivores), if the apple is still there you have moles (carnivores).

If you have questions about vole and mole control please contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Chamber...

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out on hearing what's going on at the Capitol when it comes to your insuring your family and life.

Do you want to be part of a movie? Contact the Chamber about the upcoming Legends of Blairsville Mini-Series how you can be a part. You may even be the next big star or be able to tell everyone you invested in the next big hit!

Remember, be kind to your neighbor because the people are who make Blairsville-Union County such a special place to live. Help us to keep life Better in Blairsville!

Tornabene...

continued from Page 4A

into a restrictive classification. With time, this classification will move further downstream towards the Dam.

"Four things come not back: The spoken word; The sped arrow; Time past; The neglected opportunity" (OMAR IBN, AL HALIF, THE SECOND CALIPH).

Thomas G. Tornabene

Dyer...

continued from Page 4A

practices that can help prevent wildfires from destroying your home. These practices can be found at Firewise USA®. For information on Firewise USA® or how to better prepare your home, contact your local U.S. Forest Service or Georgia Forestry Commission office.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~



Gov. Kemp: Georgia Unemployment Rate Drops to Historic Low of 3.2%

Governor Brian P. Kemp applauded Georgia's unemployment rate dropping for the seventeenth straight month to 3.2% for September, an all-time low. Additionally, the number of employed Georgians rose above 5 million for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, and the number of unemployed Georgians was reported at the lowest level since June 2001 (161,786).

"As the top state for business for an eighth straight year with an all-time low unemployment rate, Georgia's economy is booming," said Governor Kemp. "Keeping Georgia open for business and getting people back to work has led to nearly 200,000 jobs added this year, record investment in communities across the state, and the fewest unemployed Georgians

in twenty years. This historic news highlights the Peach State as the best place to live, work, and raise a family."

Jobs were up 14,300 (1.3%) over the month and up 194,400 (4.4%) over the year to 4,578,200. 86% of the jobs lost in March 2020 and April 2020 have been gained back.

To take advantage of recruitment tools available to manage an employee talent search at no cost, employers can reach out to the Georgia Department of Labor for support and also access Employ Georgia to post job openings, search applicants, and invite potential candidates to apply.

For more information on jobs and current labor force data, visit Georgia LaborMarket Explorer to view a comprehensive report.

Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



October 27, 2021
in memory of
Kelsey Elizabeth Bowles
on her 30th Birthday
By: Kim, Barry, Abby,
and Brady Bowles
Bell ringing information
at 706-745-5493