

Outdoor Burning for Fall

Each spring and fall we provide tips and information on outdoor burning. Fall is usually the time when property owners dispose of leaves and other yard debris in this manner.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief David Dyer



Property owners are allowed to burn hand-piled leaves and/or yard debris as long as they follow the outdoor burning safety standards as explained by the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC).

The outdoor burning safety standards are actions and precautions that property owners must take to provide safety and to prevent out of control wildfires.

The first "S" represents Space. There must be 25 feet or more between the fire and woodlands. The second "S" also represents Space stating that there must be 50 feet or more between the fire and any structures.

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Just as a reminder, property owners are only allowed to burn certain materials. Only hand-piled leaves or naturally occurring materials.

See Dyer, page 5A

The Real Disaster

A wind-fueled fire destroyed the historic village of Lahaina in Maui. Libya experienced flooding. Morocco suffered an earthquake.

If no one had died in the fire, flood, or earthquake, we may never have heard of them. Nor would we call them a disaster. Only when human life is subject to the forces of nature do we call it a disaster.

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



But the loss of life opens God up to a complaint. Why does He allow a world with suffering? Philosopher Vince Vitale answers the question with a story.

As you walk through your own disaster or suffering, you must know that God has not left you alone. One of Jesus' names is Emmanuel, meaning "God with us."

God stepped into our suffering world in order to set it right. "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried... He was pierced through for our transgressions.

God continues to intervene in this suffering world, and He is not finished with it.

See Fowler, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

Before I start this series of questions, I want the public to know that while I do not have a pet because I have no time to have one, I have had many dogs in the past.

Q & A from Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris



Q. What is a "service dog?" A. A "service dog" is an American with Disability Act (ADA) federal regulation designation.

Q. What are the most common disabilities a "service dog" assists an owner with?

A. PTSD, Vision Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Hypoglycemia/Diabetes, and Depression.

Q. Is an "emotional support" dog the same as a "service dog?"

A. NO! Actually, there is no difference in an "emotional support" dog and a pet. Neither requires certification and most pets provide some type of emotional support to their owners.

Q. Does every dog that has a "service dog" vest mean that it is a real service dog?

A. No it does not, but fortunately most people abide by the ADA regulations. You can usually tell when a person has a real "service dog" from the behavior of the dog.

Q. Are there any Health Department "rules" that apply to service establishments?

See Paris, page 5A

Problems II

Problems emerge in our lives from our interfering in the life of another person without being asked. We go into another person's personal arena where the holy angels fear to wander.

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



We set ourselves up to fail. When we take on problems that are not ours, our friend can be left depressed, discouraged, disappointed, and angry because we have steered the person in the wrong direction.

See Ashurst, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Thank You Aldi

I volunteer at a local food pantry and am working towards eliminating the use of plastic bags. Last week, I stopped at Aldi and explained that I wanted to buy 50 reusable grocery bags to give away.

Robert Hume

Senior Service Suggestion

Union County offers wonderful activities and services for its senior citizens. I would like to suggest one more.

Many communities offer a free computerized phone-in system that allows seniors to call a number, at a time of day they select, to "check in."

This would not only give that senior peace of mind but their family as well.

Jane O'Brien A Senior!

Re: "Stronger Together"

In response to the op-ed on "Stronger Together":

Have you seen any of the funds directed at our "crumbling infrastructure?" Remember Obama had a similar mega-billion expenditure program.

The American debt is now over \$87,000 for every man, woman and child in our Country.

Our "infrastructure" would likely not be "crumbling" if the Federal and State taxes we pay on each gallon of auto fuel were correctly and efficiently used for their intended purpose - maintaining infrastructure like bridges, roads, airports, rail and harbors.

The writer goes on to demand that we "stop" lobbyists in Washington. As if that wasn't against the First Amendment.

See Tarter, page 5A

Lithium-ion Batteries

Lithium-ion batteries are increasingly found in devices and systems that the public and first responders use or interact with daily. While these batteries provide an effective and efficient source of power, the likelihood of them overheating, catching on fire, and even leading to explosions increases when they are damaged or improperly used, charged, or stored.

RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



These batteries store a large amount of energy in a small amount of space. Sometimes batteries are not used the right way; batteries not designed for a specific use can be dangerous. Like any product, a small number of these batteries are defective.

Stop using the battery if you notice these problems: odor, change in color, too much heat, change in shape, leaking, or odd noises. If it is safe to do so, move the device away from anything that can catch fire.

Lithium-ion batteries are usually the source of power for both, and if not used correctly, or if damaged, those batteries can catch on fire or explode.

See Riley, page 5A

Boogers in the Night

Growing up in the country, kids like me learned all types of things about scary boogers or events that happened to other people. I have heard old folks talk about fluorescent green, glowing lights that followed people as they walked down lonely stretches of roads in dark woods during the night.

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Many of these stories were told to me before the TV became the far-reaching influence it is today. Back in those days children and adults used their imagination more than we use our imaginations today.

The cow's full weight was resting on the board and she was having trouble getting free of the well and board. She would bellow a deep, mournful, guttural sound resembling a growl from an old she-bear.

A month or so later a mad dog came to Papa's house. Granny said their house was not even finished yet, and since it was still summer, the walls of the house weren't boarded up yet.

See Cummings, page 5A

Leave the Leaves

Leaves are beginning to fall from the trees. Soon they will be littered all over the ground. However, we shouldn't think of leaves as litter. They are a natural product that is beneficial in a lot of ways.

In the fall most, people will get out their rakes and leaf blowers to remove the leaves from their yards.

The end result is a yard that looks very tidy and neat, but also a yard that has removed a crucial element of the nutrient cycle and disrupted the life cycle of many beneficial insects.

Another great benefit of leaving the leaves is that it helps beneficial insects. Lots of insects will lay their eggs in the leaves. Butterflies and moths will lay eggs in the leaves to emerge next year.

Turtles, toads, birds, salamanders, and small mammals use the leaves for food, shelter, and nesting material. All of these critters need a place to spend the winter.

If you have more leaves than you can handle consider putting the extra around trees, ornamental plants, and in garden beds as a natural mulch.

See Williams, page 5A

Chamber of Commerce

I would like to thank all those that stepped up to help make the Sorghum Parade happen again this year. When the call went out, the community responded and continues to respond.

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President Steve Rowe



We have seen the power of social media come full circle over the past couple of weeks. It has brought our community together to continue a long-standing tradition, but then it has also severely divided us.

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**ply to non-service dogs/pets in places that serve/sell food?**

A. Yes. In the State of Georgia, you CANNOT have any type of pet, service dog or emotional support dog in any public or permitted venue area where food is being prepared. It is strictly against the law and prohibited. You can call the Union County Health Dept. or any other law enforcement agency to report this abuse, because it could negatively impact the public health. Remember this is only the food preparation area, not the seating area. It is up to the restaurant whether to allow pets in the dining area, except for "service dogs" that are allowed in all areas except the food preparation area.

**Q. I have seen little and big fluffy dogs in Home Depot and other stores including grocery stores and Wal Mart in the shopping carts. In my mind this is a public health issue. Several of my friends find it alarming that pets are allowed in grocery stores and**

**restaurants that are obviously not "service dogs." What are the regulations?**

A. Most of this has been covered in the above answers. However, in researching for this column, we found it is up to the food service store or grocery store to decide if they will or will not allow pets in their facility.

**Q. What can we do if we do not feel the way a store is handling its pet issue is sanitary?**

A. It is a personal decision for you as a shopper. The obvious answer is to contact the store operator if you see what you think is abuse. In the case of large corporate types of stores, you would need to contact their corporate offices since the decisions related to pets in the stores usually come from above.

**Q. Are there any regulations for non-food stores regarding pet access to their stores.**

A. No, it is strictly up to the store owner or operator.

## Ashurst... continued from Page 4A

in the life of the other person. Misery and disappointment are twin emotions that can hit our friend head-on. As a result, our friend remains confused, and the problem still exists.

"Deciding whose problem is it" will absolutely free you. You no longer have to assume that you must straighten out your entire world of relationships. Your conscience remains clear and secure because you have not steered someone in the wrong direction.

There will be times when you do have to get involved in situations not belonging to you, such as abuse, death and dying, grief, and addiction. But be very cautious? We need to tiptoe through these issues.

For whatever reasons, we humans can trap ourselves in conflicts that are not even remotely close to our affairs. We wake up one morning to find ourselves slap-dab in the midst of problems that wholeheartedly belong on the back stairs of others. We may choose to get tangled in the web of their problems because we are searching for excitement in our lives, for superiority over our relationships, or for our personal loneliness.

Moreover, there are folks who end up in the middle of two opposing forces without the foggiest idea of how they became involved. No hint, no clue, no desire. Yet, they

are in the O.K. Corral, verbal guns blasting, with Wyatt Earp Complainer #1 against Frank McLaury, Complainer #2. And as an innocent bystander, we just happen to drive up in our 20-year-old Fiat that we've named Trigger.

If we had been watching and thinking clearly, we would have seen the "verbal gunfight" enactment and establish a 10-mile berth with Trigger leading us away in our trusty Fiat. But perhaps we permitted our curiosity or nosiness to valiantly steer us into that O.K. Corral. Here comes the bloodshed!

I am by no means making light of such a situation, but maybe you can laugh or smile because probably you have placed yourself in such an intense, excruciating predicament at least once during your lifetime.

Because we may have gotten caught up at that moment in the "verbal gunfight" in the O.K. Corral, we perhaps neglected or just plain forgot to ask ourselves the questions: "Whose problem is it? Mine or theirs?" If the obvious answer is theirs, "how come I'm getting in the middle?"

If we decide to continually become involved in problems that are not ours, we need to wear our "six shooters," because we most likely will always find ourselves in a never-ending battle.

## Riley...continued from Page 4A

these devices. Damaged or defective batteries can overheat, catch fire, or explode. Lithium-ion battery fires give off toxic gases and they burn extremely hot. Do not store batteries in direct sunlight or inside hot vehicles and keep them away from children and liquids. Store e-bikes, e-scooters, and batteries away from exit doors and anything that can get hot or catch fire. (Stop using the e-bike or e-scooter if you notice any of these problems with the battery: unusual odor, change in color, too much heat, change in shape, leaking, smoking, or not keeping a charge.

Experts predict the number of electric vehicles (EVs) in the United States will grow by more than eight times over the next 10 years. Currently, many EVs are powered by lithium-ion batteries. For firefighters, EV fires involving lithium-ion batteries are some of the most challenging incidents to respond to. EV fires have been known to burn longer than fires involving traditional, gasoline-powered vehicles, with instances of EV fires reigniting hours, or even days, after the initial fire is controlled. Typically, these blazes take more water to extinguish, too, and it can be difficult for responders to apply water to areas it is needed.

The impact of AFV crashes involves serious, potentially fatal, on-scene injuries to both emergency responders and vehicle occupants, as well as the possibility of property damage and post-incident injury or death, to investigators and tow and salvage personnel. Potential dangers may involve strand-

ed energy, unexpected silent movement, toxic, and flammable gases emanating from a damaged high voltage battery, thermal runaway, battery fires, and the possibility of electric shock through exposed high voltage wires and components, as well as charging station events. To date, the vast majority of firefighters and emergency responders haven't received training or had experience with AFV incidents, putting both themselves and the operators of these vehicles at risk.

Hybrid electric and plug-in electric vehicles will account for a large percentage of total U.S. vehicle sales in near future, followed by exponential growth as the technology continues to become more affordable. The U.S. Department of Transportation has determined that new hybrid and EV technology is not inherently more dangerous to emergency responders and the public than conventional gasoline internal combustion engine vehicles. However, emergency responders simply haven't had the training and experience with AFV incidents, as opposed to 100 years of education and familiarity with conventional combustion engine vehicles. Meanwhile, NFPA's statistics show that a car fire occurs every two minutes in the U.S., making the need for adequate incident training all the more imperative. Wood Mizer now has developed a batter powered sawmill like my gas-powered mill. A long way from the 00 Fracks of the past! What will they think of next?

For more information go to [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org).

## Cummings... continued from Page 4A

today we would say a mad dog was rabid. Granny said this dog was slobbering at the mouth and attacked their dog. Next the dog came for the family. Granny sent the dogs up into the loft while Papa fetched the gun. She said, "Papa would run from one side of the house to the other searching for the dog." Papa was running around while Granny directed him to a spot where she thought the dog could be safely shot. She said, "The story is funny now. But, back then if a man got bitten by a rabid dog it was a death sentence." Finally, Papa was able to shoot the dog. He later said, "Your Granny told me to

get doors hung on that house, and I did."

Your imagination can cause you some severe problems. In the first story Papa was scared of a sound. Little did he realize the sound was nothing but his old milk cow. In the second story Granny was so stricken with fear for Papa's safety she couldn't give him proper directions. It is fun to let our imaginations run wild about sounds in the night and things we don't understand. Many times we think that our ancestors were foolish for letting their imaginations get the best of them. But, before we make fun of people in Papa's time, let us be reminded there are people today that let their imaginations run wild. Just look at social media and the newspapers to be reminded about people's imaginations.

## Fowler...

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humanitarian aid and relief efforts. Just as Jesus modeled courage and sacrifice by dying on the cross for our sins, we live out those virtues on behalf of our fellow image-bearers. Our high calling to love our neighbors invites them to know the God who loves.

By repentance and faith in Jesus, you secure a home where there will no longer be any death, mourning, crying, or pain (Rev. 21:4). So, please don't use suffering to question God's existence - that would be the real disaster.

## Williams...

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will destroy any insects or eggs that are in the leaves.

Grass for lawns is the largest irrigated 'crop' in the US at over 40 million acres. That's more than irrigated corn or soybean. If everyone made sure that their lawn was a welcome habitat for pollinators and other critters it would make a huge difference. If you have questions about your leaves, contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

Thursday, October 12 at 4 PM the Towns-Union Master Gardener Association will have their monthly meeting at the Hiawassee City Hall upstairs training room. Ray Covington, Superintendent of the Blairsville Experiment Station, will be presenting on the work that they do. This event is open to the public.

## Chamber...

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can cost our small businesses in the long run.

We hope you come out and join us this weekend and show your support for all those that quickly came together to make sure this year's parade is the best one ever.

Dust off your boots and get ready to boogie again, as the Square Dance will be at 8 PM on both October 14 and 21st. Thanks to the Union County Recreation Department for bringing the tradition of the Square Dance back again. It's been greatly missed.

This is what makes life better in Blairsville!

## Dyer...

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ring yard debris can be burned. Household garbage or other man-made materials cannot be burned.

Anyone who burns hand-piled leaves or yard debris should research the law and outdoor burning safety requirements. For more information about outdoor burning and the five safety precautions, please visit [www.gatrees.org](http://www.gatrees.org).

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

## Tarter...

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Lobbyists serve a purpose for their various industries and causes. The Senators and Congressdoobies can't possibly keep informed of what's going on in industry particularly with the collapse of real journalism in print and other media. Lobbyists are like lawyers and insurance agents, you don't like it but they are a necessary... thing.

Biden is not up to the job he has, and whomever is pulling the strings is running up national debt and robbing our bank accounts with rising fuel costs and inflation.

We're "saving the planet" by shutting down drilling and mining in our own country and buying fuel from distant countries and shipping at great cost and waste of fuel our nation needs back to us.

It's absurd when you think about it but, hey, that's the operative word.

**J. Murray Tarter**