

## Hiking During the Fall Season

The leaves are turning, and we are well into our fall season. One of the many things that people do during this time of year is go hiking to see the many colors of our North Georgia Mountains. There will be a host of people from all over the area enjoying the scenery and the views from our multiple mountain trails. Unfortunately, these enjoyable moments can turn to difficult times, even tragedy, when hikers become lost or injured. Union County Emergency Management Agency would like to provide some tips for hiking and how to prevent these issues.

**Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief**  
David Dyer



Hiking can be great exercise, but hikers should know their limits. There are a multitude of different trails throughout Union County, each with different physical requirements. For the person who wants to enjoy nature without a long, strenuous hike in the mountains, there are several great trails at the various county and state parks. For the more adventurous, there is the Appalachian Trail and its various access trails. These trails can be physically challenging to the less experienced and less conditioned hiker.

No matter the trail you choose, you must always know what you're getting into. Hikers should research the trail and map it out before they start. They should know the distance, the start and finish, the terrain, the difficulty of the trail, and their hiking pace. A hike from Byron Herbert Reece access to Blood Mountain, for example, is a 2-mile mountain hike. The average mountain hiker walks one mile per hour, which would make this hike a four-hour hike. Hikers should allow enough time to complete their hike.

Hikers should know the weather and be prepared. Hikers should wear the appropriate clothing and footwear. It is also a good idea to dress in layers as well as have extra clothes. Hikers should carry essential equipment such as water, snacks, map, flashlight with extra batteries, first-aid kit, whistle, and something to start a fire.

If you take a cellphone, ensure that it is charged. Cellphones can be unreliable, and there are many places with no cell service. Hikers should not depend on cellphones for flashlights, maps, or GPS.

Hiking can be a great outdoor adventure during this fall season.

See Dyer, page 5A

## From Goth to Grace

Gothic influencer Katherine von Drachenberg (a.k.a. Kat Von D) made headlines recently. The story was not about her career as a tattoo artist, television personality, entrepreneur, and recording artist. It was far more profound than her celebrity. She publicly announced that she has embraced Christianity.

To vouch for the authenticity of her conversion is above my pay grade. But she made some meaningful statements on Instagram that reflect Christian truths. In fact, these are what you would expect from someone who searches for truth and ends up in the right place.

She said, "I got a lot of things wrong in my past." In Christian parlance, this is repentance. "Repent," Jesus said, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 4:17). By that He means you acknowledge you got it wrong when you were the ruler of your own life, but now you submit to living with Jesus as Lord. I spoke with a young man about this recently. He was hesitant to shift his allegiance to Christ, fearing he might fail. I explained that repentance includes the faith that God empowers you to live a repentant life. The Bible calls that being "born again," and "a new creation."

Kat Von D said she "threw out books that just don't align with who I am and who I want to be. I've always found beauty in the macabre, but at this point, I just had to ask myself what is my relationship with this content?" Deciding to become a Christian invites a change in priorities, values, and identity. The current cultural mood holds sexual orientation and gender identity as the highest expressions of identity. But the Christian identity is solely about a Person, Jesus. That new identity imports the values and priorities of grace and truth. Living out that identity means jettisoning things that do not "align with who I am and who I want to be." Align with this: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal. 5:22).

In the Instagram post, Kat Von D shows grace and tolerance. "We are all on our own journey," she writes, "and I love everyone regardless of where they might be at." The high ethics of Jesus includes loving your neighbor. That is not too hard. But He also said love your enemy. The journey for the Christian means

**All Things New**  
Wayne Fowler



See Fowler, page 5A

## Commissioner's Questions

Union County has experienced several serious storms recently – resulting in flooding and downed trees. The CodeRED system is available to all Union County residents who would like to be forewarned when serious storms blow through. This week's questions are a result of conversations I have had when visiting with residents in our community.

**Q. I keep hearing about CodeRED. What is that?**

A. CodeRED is a web-based critical communication solution that enables public safety personnel to notify residents, businesses and visitors by phone, text, and email of time-sensitive information, emergencies, or urgent notifications in a timely manner. One of the major responsibilities of emergency management is to ensure that the public is properly informed of emergencies and incidents that may affect the community.

**Q. I didn't know we had an Emergency Alert System. How do I sign up to receive these alerts?**

A. If you have not registered for notifications, we strongly encourage you to register with CodeRED to receive weather and emergency notifications. There is no charge to register or use CodeRED, and your personal information will be kept confidential. County residents are strongly encouraged to go to the CodeRED website, [tinyurl.com/ucalerts](http://tinyurl.com/ucalerts), and register. Once you register, you will be able to customize your alerts and how you receive them. You can also find the link to CodeRED on the Union County Government website at [www.unioncountyga.gov](http://www.unioncountyga.gov) or you can text UCALERTS to 99411.

**Q. I signed up for this service a few years back and have been receiving notifications. Do I need to do anything to continue receiving emergency notifications?**

A. Once you have registered/signed up, the only thing you need to do is keep your address, phone numbers and email address up to date.

**Q. How will CodeRED benefit me?**

A. The CodeRED system allows Union County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) to provide notifications that may require immediate action (such as a boil-water notice, a missing

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**  
Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

## Departure

Many people come and go during our lifetime. If we tried to count the number, it would easily be in the thousands. Childhood pals, elementary, middle, high school friends, college comrades, career associates, church folks, volunteers, family members, and civic club members all have combined to help us become the individuals we are today. Even with our current remarkable wireless communication system, it would be quite impossible to maintain contact with the endless number of people.

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



It is obvious that we have to let go of people as we move from one life stage to another. We barely can keep up with people in our immediate circle. We claim everyone as our friends. And yet researchers claim that during our life on earth, we will have truthfully only one or two genuine true friends — individuals who know all of our strengths and weaknesses, past and present, bad and good experiences, and still loves us. If

See Ashurst, page 5A

## Letters to the Editor

### Electric School Buses

Dear Editor,  
Regarding the new electric school buses mentioned in the Oct. 3 paper, the \$1.5 million grant is not free money as Superintendent Hill claimed. We all contributed to the buses through the taxes that we are paying. Some of that money is returned to Union County through the grant process.

Electric vehicles sales are on the rise; 6% of all cars sold in 2022 were electric. Replacing carbon-producing gas vehicles with electric vehicles brings major health benefits like lung health, improved air quality and reduced climate pollution.

The school bus money came through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law passed by the Democrat-controlled Senate led by Senator Schumer, a House of Representatives led by Congresswoman Pelosi and signed by President Biden. That is called good governance for the people!

Frank Maloney

### Spread the Word

Dear Editor,  
Thank you Blairsville-Union County for making Taco Thursday a success. Let's not stop here. Spread the word. We the people can be as one. Let Washington know that they are not doing their job. Let this not stop here. Come on, TikTok, do what you do best to ensure the people are once again united. Come on Alaska, reach out to Hawaii, Michigan, Arizona and Florida! Don't let our spirit stop here. Get the word out. Tell a friend.

Love you Blairsville,  
Fred Elias

### Wake Up

Dear Editor,  
When I see letters to the editor about how great the Biden inflation act is working and letters talking about how wonderful Medicare is, I know that once again the Bible has been proven truthful.

The Bible tells us that in the end days crime will explode (lawlessness) and there is no discernment of the truth (if you don't know what discernment means, go look it up). All this is true; lies are told and people cannot see the truth. These lies tell us that the election process in this state and county are safe. LIE.

Don't hide your head in the sand. Take a deep breath and face the facts: the 2020 election was riddled with fraud.

See Lausier, page 5A

## Letters to the Editor

### See You Next Year

Dear Union County,  
Thank you so much for keeping the Sorghum Festival Parade tradition alive. You volunteered in numbers to help set up and manage the crowd, you created great floats, brought your organizations together to participate and showed up on the parade route with eagerness and excitement. It was a great parade!

A special thank-you goes to The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce for all of the help assisting to set up the parade and to advertise the Blairsville Sorghum Festival. The festival could not take place without the commitment of Union County and especially the

See Festival, page 5A

### Hope House Says Thanks

Dear Editor,  
Hope House of Union County would like to thank Chick-fil-A of Blairsville for sponsoring and providing lunch for pastors of our 16 sponsoring churches earlier this month when Hope House hosted its Pastor Appreciation Luncheon. Chick-fil-A's generosity also extended to providing meals for our board members and staff volunteers in attendance.

Hope House is a faith-based organization that provides assistance with the basic necessities.

See Hope House, page 5A

### Questions

Dear Editor,  
The Union County Board of Elections meets on the second Monday each month at 10 a.m. The following questions are just some that you can ask when you attend a meeting, but first of all, why are these meetings held at a time when no working people can attend? You have to attend a meeting because there is no full-time employee to answer your questions over the phone. Maybe this could be remedied if their office and the Board of Registrar's Office were combined like the other 158 counties are. Also,

See Brookins, page 5A

### Re: "County Commissioner"

Dear Editor,  
The five-member commission would be part-time people with no private offices, no pensions, no cars, no insurance, no five secretaries, no computers, etc. The financial savings would be substantial. Please get properly informed on this issue and base your opinion on facts, not rumors and fiction.

Julie Walker Hood

## Athel

Athel was a first cousin to my Maw maw Adams, and she was my mother's best friend. She was the type of person that made something positive out of a tragedy-filled life. Her mother was Malvie Motes. Malvie was a younger sister of my Great-Grandmother Alvie.

As a young girl Malvie fell in love with a fellow who would become a preacher. Everyone thought that Malvie and Tom made quite the couple. The young man was an aspiring preacher and Malvie was a person that trusted everyone. After a few months of marriage, the young man was soon tempted by another woman and left a young and expecting Malvie, and soon she gave birth to a beautiful little girl she named Athel. Even from a young age the girl was a hit with the family. She was beautiful, caring and mature for her age.

People would tell Malvie that her estranged husband was seeing other women. But she always said, "Tom loves me and someday he'll come home." A few years passed and Malvie became deathly sick. While she was lying on her death bed, he came to see her and explained that he had some papers she needed to sign. He further explained that the papers would allow him to sell their present house and then "we could get a bigger one." Malvie just knew that her husband had come to his senses and was going to take care of Athel. So, she signed the papers which turned out to be divorce documents. Upon her mother's death Athel was left without a mother or father. Her father tricked her trusting Mother and never did anything to support his daughter.

Athel was taken in by her Aunt Alvie and Uncle Charlie Baker. These were the grandparents to my mother. Mom said, "I always enjoyed visiting my grandparents because Athel was living with them. She was always the person who would take me for walks. I can remember we would walk by Dad Baker's (Charlie) apple tree. Dad always told his grandkids to stay away from his apples." So, one day as a little girl, Mom and her cousin were walking by the tree and Mom decided she wanted an apple. Athel knew she wasn't supposed to steal one of Dad's apples, but, she disregarded Dad's rule and took the apple and gave it to her younger cousin. Mom bit into the apple and was thoroughly enjoying it when her grandfather, Dad Baker, walked up. Imagine a little girl looking up at her bigger-than-life Grandfather all the while trying to explain a mouth full of forbidden apple. Mom never received any punishment, however, her

See Cummings, page 5A

**Around The Farm**

Mickey Cummings



## Erosion Control

Georgia, along with much of the Southeastern U.S., doesn't have a positive past with erosion. Repetitive cropping of cotton in the Piedmont resulted in seven inches of topsoil being washed away into the ocean. Soil takes hundreds of years to create, meaning that loss of soil is something that is felt for generations. By the 1950s, new policies and programs began to change Georgia from endless cotton fields to forestland and other uses that are less susceptible to erosion. In the mountains, there is always a threat of erosion if we aren't proactive with protecting our landscape. Let's talk about why we should care about erosion and some things that you can do to make sure that your land isn't eroded away.

Erosion can also lead to water quality issues. Not only does the topsoil muddy up our lakes and rivers, but also the nutrients that the topsoil is carrying can create algal blooms leading to decreased aquatic life. That is bad news for our lakes and the fish that inhabit them. Erosion can also create a hard pan that will repel water and increases surface runoff. Once top soil has eroded away it is much more difficult to grow in the remaining subsoil.

So, what you can do to reduce erosion? First, construction makes soil very susceptible to erosion. Removing all the vegetation from the top of the soil leaves it open to the rainfall. In construction, surround the project site with hay bales and silt fences, preserve the already existing vegetation, and keep any piles of loose vegetation or gravel covered. Whenever you're clearing land try to leave as much of the existing vegetation as possible. This means you won't need to plant as much back once your project is finished.

Planting permanent vegetation is the long-term goal for erosion control. Mulch can also be used temporarily while you are establishing vegetation. Trees are going to be the best for long term protection from erosion. The deep roots that they have means that they do a better job of holding soil in place than grass does. Grasses can help intercept runoff and infiltrate it back into the soil. Shrubs are good at creating cover and habitat for wildlife, and trees are best at blocking noise.

A lot of our soil in the mountains is most likely going to need lime and fertilizer before you can replant it with vegetation. A soil test is a great place to start to learn how much lime and fertilizer you need to add. The lime will raise the pH into the range for plant growth. Ground that has been cleared for new construction is most

See Williams, page 5A

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Kenneth West Publisher/Owner  
Shawn Jarrard General Manager/Editor  
Derek Richards Advertising Director  
Todd Forrest Sports Editor  
Lowell Nicholson Photographer

Website: [www.nganews.com](http://www.nganews.com) • Email: [northgeorgianews@hotmail.com](mailto:northgeorgianews@hotmail.com) • Mail: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

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**Paris... continued from Page 4A**

child, a weather emergency, or an evacuation notice). The system delivers texts, emails, and phone calls to cells or home phones. Union County EMA also uses CodeRED to send EMERGENCY notifications to keep citizens informed of emergencies such as evacuation notices, fires, floods, chemical spills, or other emergency situations. CodeRED Weather Warning is a unique service that automatically notifies citizens in the

path of severe weather just moments after a warning has been issued by the National Weather Service.

**Q. Is there a cost to register for CodeRED?**

A. No, registering for CodeRED phone calls, texts, and emails is free to you. The cost is covered by the county. If you need assistance or have additional questions you can call Union County EMA at (706) 439-6091.

**Brookins... continued from Page 4A**

you can't email them because their official addresses have not been available on the Union County Government website.

Is the QR code legally required on the ballots? Does anybody have a QR code reader that can verify that the QR code data matches the vote that has been cast? If there is anything on the ballot that is not legally required, does that mean that they are considered as "spoiled ballots?" Is a spoiled ballot counted as a legal vote? Do the local election boards have the legal authority to disqualify any system that consistently produces spoiled ballots?

Does an "air gap" mean that the machines are not connected to the internet with a cable? Can your phone connect to the internet without

using a connecting cable? Do any of the Dominion machines have modem cards installed in them? Who checks to see if there are any? Dominion employees? Does the E-Pulse system that monitors the precincts, connect to the internet? If no, how does it transmit information to the officials at the main office? How does it transmit the results on election night? How does it update the voter rolls just before the voting starts?

Why does anybody in the U.S. object to paper ballots? Australia, Canada, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, and New Zealand all use paper ballots and have them counted before midnight on election night.

**David Brookins**

**Ashurst... continued from Page 4A**

we have three, then we are the exception. Four friends? Hum-m-m-m-m-m. So, for argument sake, we will pretend that all the multitude of people we know are our genuine friends.

But there comes a time when there is a necessity to weed out carefully those individuals in our lives who are destructive. They do not add one positive element into the relationship. They can take a sunny day of ours and turn it quickly into a dismal experience. They are like a dark cloud hovering over us, and any umbrella of hope of ours to survive in the relationship is emotionally choking. We attempt to battle their onslaught of negativity and pessimistic attitudes, but inside we know that we are losing in the battle of the minds. After a visit with them, we are emotionally and physically exhausted. All of us have these types of people in our lives.

Because these individuals can be like parasites, there is a necessity to move them out of our lives if we are planning on surviving. Giving them departure papers will probably be one of the most difficult things to do. Letting go is quite like cleaning out one's attic or garage. There are those places in our homes that are filled with unsightly clutter, and when we

clean out the clutter, we feel better. We feel in control. We feel happier. Some individuals in our arena represent our messy attic or garage. They clutter up our minds with negativity. They build their happiness on our unhappiness, and they have no redeeming quality that adds to our lives, only takes away. We spend so much time with them that we miss out on being with those who add precious moments to our lives.

It isn't simple to let people go, especially if we have known them for a long time. We feel uneasy and awkward. One of the discomforts is actually doing it. We have no clue how they will respond. They may feel hurt, angry, sad, and disappointed. And at that moment we may not exactly feel joyous. And yet, we know it must be done if we want to be a complete, contented, positive self.

Other feelings regarding the departure process may be fear and worry. What will be the repercussions? Will the repercussions be severe? We just don't know. Are we sure that we are doing the right thing? Questions, questions, decisions, decisions. We often pray, "God, please help me."

*More next week about Departure.*

**Williams... continued from Page 4A**

likely going to be very poor quality, even if top soil has been put back. In these cases, the addition of lime, fertilizer, and compost is best practice.

Minimizing impermeable surfaces such as the driveway or walkway on your property will also reduce erosion. Obviously, you will need some impermeable surfaces at your property, such as a roof for your house. For cases like that, it's important to design pathways for the water from those impermeable surfaces to travel so that they can be deposited in

a place where they can soak back into the ground. Rain gardens collect water to infiltrate back into the soil instead of having it run downhill. Usually they have plants that are adapted to living in damp soils. Impermeable surfaces don't slow water down, and that velocity allows water to do more erosion damage.

If you have any questions about erosion or what you can do to prevent erosion at your property please contact your County Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

**Festival...continued from Page 4A**

employees and volunteers of the Fire and Rescue Team, The Recreation Department and the Transportation Department. Thanks to each of you who gave of your time and energy to put on a great festival.

From opening day until Sunday afternoon (Union County Day), both visitors and locals enjoyed the delicious sorghum syrup made by the Blairsville Sorghum Syrup Makers. Their commitment to

keeping the tradition of syrup making alive is commendable. All of us involved in hosting the festival want to thank our out-of-town visitors as well as our local visitors who continue to enjoy the festival, visit our vendors' booths, buy syrup, sit and cheer on the contestants at the games and enjoy the entertainment. We look forward to seeing you again next year.

**The Blairsville Sorghum Festival Committee**

**Cummings... continued from Page 4A**

cousin received a stern warning. When Dad Baker left, the two girls giggled all the way back to the house.

One day while playing in the front yard of the Baker house, the two girls noticed a man walking up the road. You guessed it, the man was the one and only Tom. Athel looked at Mom and said, "I have always heard that man is my Daddy. I have asked and asked and nobody will tell me the truth." So, the young 13-year-old girl walked up to the man and point blank asked, "Preacher Tom, are you my Daddy?" He would not even look at the young girl while he denied being her Daddy.

Everyone in the community knew she didn't have an active Daddy, and some took advantage of the fact. For example, the Enterprise School out close to Gray Rock was a three-room school house.

**Fowler...**

**continued from Page 4A**

loving those who disagree with you or despise you for Who you represent. It is your high calling to "be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us" (Eph. 5:1).

Join me in praying that this lady influences many to consider her journey from goth to grace. And may your journey take you along the narrow way that leads to life.

**Dyer...**

**continued from Page 4A**

son; however, hiking comes with risks. We would like for everyone to understand these risks and be prepared. These are just a few tips for hikers to consider when enjoying the beautiful trails in Union County.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

**Hope House...**

**continued from Page 4A**

ties of life to Union County residents, transients, and homeless population who are in critical need. Funding is provided by individuals and participating churches. Located at 215 Blue Ridge Street, Hope House is open from 9 a.m. to noon Monday and Tuesday and from 1 to 4 p.m. on Thursday to meet with those in need.

Chick-fil-A is a faithful supporter of our community and of Hope House, including participating in our annual fundraiser, the Super Chef Showdown scheduled for March 9, 2024, at First United Methodist Church in Blairsville.

Sincerely,  
**Ken Engle**  
Hope House Board Chair

**Chamber...**

**continued from Page 4A**

find out more about our upcoming events at 706-745-5789.

Remember, you help make Life Better in Blairsville!

**North Georgia Veteran's Memorial Markers**

North Georgia Veteran's Memorial Markers will be placing memorial markers out again the weekend before Veteran's Day. If you would like to have a marker made for a deceased veteran, please call Leslie at (706) 745-8834.

**Lausier...**

**continued from Page 4A**

A recent seminar I attended by engineers that have reviewed Georgia's 2020 election data found that 158 counties in this state suffered fraud. News flash, there are 159 counties in the state.

There are multiple ways this was accomplished. One such way was the use of non-existent addresses and precinct hijacking.

We know that the secretary of state is not working to protect the people of Georgia and is corrupt.

Recent events show us that the governor is also corrupt and is there to line his pockets, not do what is right, but do for himself. He thinks he might want to run for a federal office.

I really wish our state legislature was brave and stood up for what is right, not what is easy. There is a deep rot under the Gold Dome. So we will need to motivate Stan and Steve to do what is right. And stand up for the citizens of Georgia.

So whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, right is right, and wrong is wrong, and election fraud is wrong. It steals from all of us.  
**Eva Lausier**



**Rotary In Motion**

**Attention Union County Veterans! Free Luncheon on November 10th**



Union County Rotary Club is honoring Veterans with a Free Luncheon November 10, 11:30 AM at the Union County Community Center.

Special Guest Speaker: US Army 4 Star Gen. Bryan

"Doug" Brown (ret). Union County Dignitaries attending: Lamar Paris, Sole Commissioner Union County; Jim Conley, Mayor City of Blairsville; Mack Mason, Sheriff Union County; and Stan Gunter, Georgia State Representative, District 8.

Limited tickets are available on a first come first serve basis. Call in advance 706-745-9089 to check for availability.

Pick up your tickets at Union County Pet Hospital, 373 Blue Ridge Hwy., Blairsville, GA 30512.

**Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse**



**October 1, 2023**  
In memory of **Bill Meeks** on his birthday by Ginger and Terry Meeks

**October 22, 2023**  
In memory of **John J. Meeks** on his birthday by Ginger and Terry Meeks

**October 27, 2023**  
In loving memory of **Ricky Rivas** on the anniversary of his death  
Love, Mom and Dad

**Bell ringing information at 706-745-5493**