

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Thankful

Thanksgiving is here. At this time of the year, we are usually writing about cooking safety and cooking fires, which, by the way, is the leading cause of house fires.

Although that is an especially important subject and we want everyone to know those cooking safety tips, we as a department wanted to remind everyone of the most important part of this holiday, and that is to be thankful.

This is something that is often missed, especially this year.

The year 2020 has been a rough year for all of us. It will be a year that we will never forget. We have had losses, close calls, illness, riots, demonstrations, protests, no news, changing news, shutdowns, financial hardships, financial uncertainty, frustrations, fears and many other things this year. With all this, you may ask, what could we be thankful for?

We can all take a moment and find something for which we are thankful. It is not difficult once you get started. I do not like to play the comparison game because it usually involves people saying, "They have more than me."

But what if we look at it in another way? What if we saw people who were less fortunate than we are? We can then start to be thankful for being alive; for not being sick; for not losing a loved one; for not losing a job; and for getting through all this craziness we call 2020.

We as a department are thankful that we are still able to perform our duties and to serve our citizens. We are thankful to meet the challenges of planning, preparing and responding to not only COVID-19 but the many other incidents and events that have happened. We are thankful that we are continuing other projects that need completing. We are most thankful for the continued support of our community in all that we do.

So, during this season of thanksgiving, take a moment to stop and be thankful for the many blessings that we have. We would like for everyone to safely enjoy this Thanksgiving Season.

Also, just a reminder, we would like for everyone to review some cooking safety tips before you start cooking.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



With Gratitude

Gratitude is good for you. So says Amy Morin, author and therapist. In a Forbes magazine article, she cites scientific research to make her point.

Morin reports that gratitude isn't just good manners. Gratitude shows you value the contributions of others, and that improves your relationships. One study showed that grateful people are healthier. Gratitude tamps down the toxic emotions of envy, resentment, frustration, and regret. It even helps you sleep better! In other words, these research results agree with the Bible that thanksgiving is vital to the human experience. "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thes. 5:16). This is yet another example of God revealing truth in the Bible for your good, long before scientists arrived.

Should you thank God when it was your friend who did you a favor? Consider this: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father" (James 1:17). So, sure, thank your friend. Thank God for your friend and tell your friend as much. Joseph Addison (18th C. British essayist) wrote, "If gratitude is due from man to man, how much more from man to his Maker? The Supreme Being does not only confer upon us those bounties which proceed more immediately from His hand, but even those benefits which are conveyed to us by others."

Most people aren't looking for gratitude, hence the response, "It was nothing" (Spanish - "de nada"; French - "de rien"). But leave it out, and it is uncomfortably obvious. Once, Jesus was walking toward a village. Ten men with skin disease saw Him, but maintained their social distance. "Have pity on us!" they cried. He told them to go to the authorities to end their quarantine. As they went, they were healed. One rushed back to thank Jesus and praise God. Jesus said, "Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" (Luke 17). This encounter is a cautionary tale about how easy it is to omit gratitude.

Gratitude to God is the natural response when you contemplate His gifts: the beauty and complexity of the universe and our world; the provisions necessary for human existence and

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



See Fowler, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

Q. As a concerned citizen of Union County, I am asking, will you please stop spending and building and raising our property taxes?

A1. Raising Property Taxes: Union County has had anywhere from the lowest to the fifth lowest property tax rate out of 159 counties for nearly 20 years. Even with the recent increase, approx. 6% total, it caused us to move only up to the ninth lowest rate in the entire State of Georgia. I am very proud of that, and all employees have worked hard to make this happen.

A2. Spending and Building: I believe in always moving our county forward, and above all, looking after our young people and those older adults who call this home. Of most importance is to continue to improve our "quality of life" here. I was born and raised in Union County and have been here all of my life except for four years at the University of Georgia. If you do not want to see Union County continue to improve and prosper, this is not the county for you.

Q. We do not like all the traffic that we are having now. We are getting too crowded? What can we do about it?

A. While I admit to sometimes being frustrated with the traffic, it is part of a growing community. We do not want uncontrolled growth to where it becomes unmanageable, but finding the right combination is sometimes difficult. There are 69 counties in Georgia that are regularly losing population and business, and many are drying up. It is hard to have it both ways. The fact that the USFS and TVA own nearly 50% of the property in Union County also helps contain a certain amount of growth.

Q. Why do you think growth is good for Union County?

A. When I was young, many families moved from Blairsville to Detroit or Atlanta to find work to support their families. Some returned after retirement and some never made it back. I feel a responsibility to our young kids and families. We must have enough growth for them to be able to live here, have a decent job, raise their kids and try to prosper. Who is going to take care of the rest of us when we get older if not the young people? In order for many of them to have the option of living in this beautiful area, jobs are necessary, and that is why we have a Develop-

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Freedom vs Fear

Dear Editor,

This is just a short reply to the Nov. 18 letter "On Wearing Masks." For all the two studies the letter writer referenced saying "Face Diapers" work, you can find several studies by credible Doctors and Scientists disagreeing with those studies. There are also many studies highlighting the long-term dangerous effects of wearing masks. The majority of people wearing them are constantly touching them and then other surfaces. The majority of people wear the same masks every day and are essentially walking around with petri dishes on their faces. People are becoming stressed out, which is only weakening their immune systems.

The letter writer cited the CDC, which the CDC also did a study where 85% of people who got COVID were religious wearers of the all-mighty face masks. The states with the tightest restrictions and mask mandates have the same amount or more cases than states that don't. Stating the number of cases is useless when you don't state the actual mortality rate, which the survival rate for the average citizen is 99% or better.

People are living in fear because they don't have the ability to put everything in perspective. We lose about 650,000 people in the United States every year to Heart Disease. We lose 600,000 every year in the United States to

See Joyner, page 5A

Guilty of Fraud

Dear Editor,

President Trump is also guilty of fraud. Voter fraud is being brought to light. But spiritual fraud is also being brought to light. How is Trump guilty of fraud? By promoting Paula White, he helped spread a fraudulent gospel - a fake gospel. And the false election prophecies of White and others mark them as false prophets. They are not little gods who can declare something and make it happen. They are not little gods who can speak something into existence like the one true living and holy God. Their false prophetic declarations expose them as frauds. Unfortunately, Trump helped to perpetrate a spiritual fraud on the American people because White and others on his spiritual advisory board were idolized on "Christian" TV, and were invited to spread their doctrines of devils.

My prayer is that Trump repents and becomes a Spirit-filled Christian; and repents of bringing false prophets into the White House. These false prophets speak deception and blasphemy! Trump must repent and cast out all of these evil spirits now.

If Trump repents of the spiritual fraud he perpetrated on America, then God may give him the victory over the voter fraud.

Karen Pansler Lam

Provide the Evidence

Dear Editor,

People can and do say anything to push their agendas and "theories" - even when what they say is not steeped in facts. This has been going on since the birth of democracy. Remember McCarthyism? If you don't... look it up. If anyone has proof that voter fraud on a large scale exists, PLEASE come forward and provide the EVIDENCE! Please! Don't just write some random stuff in an opinion column!

As far as the "shoe banging" and the quote from Khrushchev; while he did band his shoe for an entirely different reason, he did not utter the words "he would win America from within." Technology is wonderful when you know how to use it. A simple "fact check" of the quote itself will suffice.

I've been reading a lot of printed misinformation from Trump supporters in this newspaper, much of which has gone unchecked. Understandable, from a county that's 90% or more Republican. So, I'd like to ask any of you to expound on the following information.

See Chavis, page 5A



Whether together or apart this Thanksgiving, we can be together in our hearts.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Letters to the Editor

Gratitude & Salutations

Dear Editor,

In honor of Veterans Day, I want to thank all veterans who served our country protecting the freedoms we enjoy, freedoms so many around the world are not able to enjoy.

Also, my hat is off and salutations go to the editorial page of the North Georgia News for exhibiting freedom of the press, freedom for allowing the prose of Allen and the wisdom of Mitchell to be published in the Nov. 11 issue.

Thanks be to God that NGN allows all views and does not suppress opinions as the electronic "elites" do out there on the internet. Respectfully,

Mac Phillips

An Opportunity to Vote

Dear Editor,

I know that we are in the throes of a COVID-19 pandemic and that everyone needs to have an opportunity to vote. But did we learn that an appropriate response to this dilemma should never have been to mail out unsolicited ballots to voters, as a number of states did including Georgia?

These unidentified ballots are extremely difficult to verify. A missing signature, an unverified signature, or late arrival are the most common reasons for a mail-in ballot to be rejected, according to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission report from the 2016 election. In that election, 318,728 ballots - just under 1% of returned absentee ballots - were rejected across the country. Not everyone is familiar with all of the ins and outs of the administrative details, like the date by which they have to return it or all the technical requirements for completing the ballot.

Mass mail-out of unsolicited ballots to voters significantly raises the possibility of a high number of rejected ballots. When there's a super close election, especially in a presidential swing state, and the margin of victory is lower than the margin of rejected ballots, then people will question the results. That will trigger recounts, litigation, and an inordinate loss of time

See Turnage, page 5A

Veteran Appreciating

Dear Editor,

My wife and I were dining at Longhorn Steakhouse recently. Having noticed my military attire, a young man and his wife acknowledged us by buying our lunch. Yes, real men get tears in their eyes. Thank this young couple and others who show acts of kindness in their fine town.

Walt & Tina Polk

Leman

Leman was an old vegetable grower from over in the mountains of Northwest Georgia. He never had much in life except for his family and his land. He grew tomatoes, beans and other vegetables. He sold them in front of the courthouse in Trenton. The old farmer never married because he was just too busy taking care of his elderly mother, Jesse. She was very healthy and lived to a ripe old age of 99. But, as she aged, she became frail, and Leman had to stay close to home to care for her. She never saw the inside of a nursing home or experienced the help of a home nurse. That was in the days before any home health services.

Leman was a man of very few hobbies. He just didn't have the time. But, one of the things he could do was dream. So, after a long day in the fields, Leman would pick up his favorite magazine to read, "National Geographic." He read about all the wonderful places he would like to visit. Places like Borneo, Brazil, Congo, Antarctica and China. When he wasn't reading the National Geographic, he would read about Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.

The old man could imagine himself floating on a raft from Lookout Valley all the way to the Tennessee River, on to the Ohio and then to the Mississippi and down to New Orleans. He could just imagine catching catfish and cooking them up a fresh fire while watching the sunset from an island on the river. His thoughts and dreams centered on this for years, until one day, he decided he would build a raft and float to New Orleans, where he'd walk around the French Quarter and eat some good Cajun food; and when he got tired, he would catch a ride on a barge back up to Memphis. He figured he could walk home from Memphis in a week. Leman thought about the process for a while and decided to leave that September, after his crops were all harvested. He just knew he could be back home before spring planting.

Leman made all the arrangements. First, he called his sister down in Birmingham and asked her to look after their aging mother. She agreed and wished her brother a safe trip. Next, he began to build his raft. He said, "I feel just like Noah, except I am not preaching to the lost." The raft was 20 feet long and 10 feet wide. Leman strapped some old whiskey barrels to the bottom of the raft to give it buoyancy. He built a little hut on the raft to protect him from storms. A stove was placed in the center of the raft to provide a source of heat.

I learned of this event from Leman himself after I had become the County Agent in Trenton, See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Oh Christmas Tree

Having a real Christmas tree can be a great tradition this time of year. There are a number of places that sell Christmas trees here. Let's talk about selecting a Christmas tree and Christmas tree care so that you can avoid a National Lampoon Christmas Vacation type situation.

Three trees grown in Georgia are firs, cypress, and cedar. Some things to consider when purchasing a Christmas tree are needle retention, strong limbs, fragrance, and dryness.

Before you even leave to buy your tree it's a good idea to select and measure the space where you'll be putting your tree. A good spot is away from space heaters, fireplaces, or wood stoves. Measure how high the tree can go in your house. It can be difficult to gauge if a tree is going to fit inside when you're looking at it outdoors. Trees can appear small outside, and then seem to grow a couple of feet once you bring them inside.

When you are selecting your tree it is important to make sure that you get one that is fresh cut. A fresh cut means that the tree will be able to absorb water more effectively, and therefore not dry out as quickly. Once the trunk of the tree has dried out you can cut off the bottom 1/2 inch to establish a new fresh cut. You really don't want your tree to be dry for more than 6-8 hours. When you are purchasing the tree give the limbs a good shake and see if many needles fall off. Then grab a branch of a tree and pull the branch through your hand. Ideally you don't want to see many needles fall off the branch. Also check for off color on any of the needles. If a bunch of needles don't fall off and the needles are a good green color you know that you have a healthy tree.

A dry Christmas tree can be a fire hazard in a house. If your tree has a fresh cut it should be able to last the entire Christmas season without drying out if you keep it well watered. There should always be water in the tree stand. Keep the water level above the cut on the tree so that the cut won't dry out and your tree is continually taking up water. Drilling a hole in the trunk does not improve water uptake. Using lights that put off heat will increase the drying of the tree. LEDs are a good option to reduce heat.

There are a couple of ways to dispose of your Christmas tree. You can use them for soil erosion barriers. If you have a pond you can sink them to create fish habitat. Chipping them to use as mulch in the garden is another good option.

Real Christmas trees are beautiful and a sound environmental choice. Trees are recyclable, produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide.

See Williams, page 5A

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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