

Opinions

Everybody has one...

When to Call

We at Union County Fire Department get many questions about our job and how to deal with emergencies. One common question is, "When should 911 be called for smoke in the area?"

This is a good question and can be difficult to answer. We always want to err on the side of caution, so if anyone thinks that there is a fire or an emergency, 911 should be called to report it.

The worst case scenario is an out of control fire. Smoke or flames coming from a building or car is an emergency and an out of control fire. Smoke and flames coming from the woods without anyone around is an out of control fire. Those should be reported immediately by calling 911. Smoke in the area may or may not be an out of control fire. There are several things to keep in mind before reporting smoke in the area.

The first question people should ask themselves is, where is the smoke coming from? That is an important piece of information. As stated before, if you locate or suspect an out of control fire, report it immediately.

When reporting smoke in the area, narrowing down the location to a specific address or road is extremely helpful. It is best to try to find the source of the smoke before you report it.

Smoke in the area may be from several sources. Some people use wood for heat, and the smoke from these fires can be the cause of the smoke. There also are controlled burns such as construction sites, brush piles and burning leaves.

These fires can create a great deal of smoke. During cool temperatures, the smoke from these fires can settle and spread over a large area, making it appear like a much larger fire. These types of controlled burns should always be attended, and they require a burning permit.

Reporting emergencies is everyone's responsibility, and we encourage everyone to call 911 for out of control fires. We also need your help when reporting smoke by locating the source and determining if it is an out of control fire. Knowing the difference between a controlled fire and an out of control fire will help people determine if there is an emergency and the need for an emergency response. If there is any doubt, please call 911 and report it.

~ Union County Fire Department - Our Family Protecting Your Family ~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Longing Angels

America's latest outrage is the messy midterm election. Both sides hurl charges of fraud. Nobody is proud of the process. Os Guinness, a social and cultural critic, might say this is but more evidence of "a heaving sea of problems" that has weakened America.

In his recent book, "Last Call for Liberty," he pulls no punches. He sees our problems as "hollowed-out beliefs and weakened ethics; declining trust in institutions and leaders; self-enriching elites; cancerous racism; pay-for-play politics; politicized criminal justice; crony capitalism; blinkered higher education; collapsed civic education; biased mainstream press; politicized corporations; crippling national debt; a surveillance state; porous borders; failing inner cities; fractious culture warring; talk of secession; social stress, anxiety, and loneliness." America is way more pluribus than unum. We are fractured, and that's dangerous for a country founded on a united definition of freedom.

An old fisherman once wrote to another distressed people that various trials can test and prove your faith. In the light of eternity, the things of earth grow strangely dim. Today we endure botched elections and a fractured citizenry, but tomorrow we will be delivered from all this, "obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet. 1:9).

The contrast between the troubles of today and the promise of eternity can fill you with hope and joy, especially when you consider the extent to which God communicated these things to us. "The prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow ... things into which angels long to look" (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

One of those prophets was Isaiah. Over 2,700 years ago, while his nation suffered its own fractures and threats, he wrote, "The people who walk in darkness will see a great light ... for a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us ... and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Is. 9).

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. Can you give us some details about the election?

A. With all the problems that have been described all over the country with voting concerns, it is very comforting that, in Union County, we have many dedicated people working the elections to ensure that they are fair and equitable. We certainly do not want to leave anyone out, but thanks to Diana Nichols (Voter Registration Office) and her staff, who managed an incredible early voting and mail-in vote this year with 7,139 votes. With record turnout for a mid-term election, we had 11,912 total voters out of 16,636 active voters, which is around 72 percent. We are one of the top percentage voting counties in the state. Also, Libby Stevens and the Election Board members did an outstanding job election day and night, including all the 57 poll workers and assistants. This makes for a long day and night. To our residents who exercised your right to vote, thank you for caring enough to make your vote count.

Q. We heard there would be a runoff election. What can you tell us about it?

A. Believe it or not, early voting will have begun when you read this. It begins Monday, Nov. 26, from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. each day through Friday, Nov. 30. Runoff Election Day is Tuesday, Dec. 4, at your voting precinct.

Q. Who is running in the Runoff election?

A. There are only two races. The Secretary of State is between Brad Raffensperger, Republican, and John Barrow, Democrat. Public Service Commissioner is between Chuck Eaton, Republican, and Lindy Miller, Democrat.

Q. Will there be a Christmas Parade with all the lights again this year?

A. Yes, the Union County Historical Society will be hosting the second annual nighttime parade. It will be on Dec. 1 at 6 p.m. The turnout in participants and spectators last year was phenomenal, so they are going to have a lighted nighttime parade again this year. This is a great community event, and if you are interested in participating in the parade, please contact the Historical Society at 706-745-5493. Many groups have already begun working on their floats, including my office. There will be fun on the

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Can CBD Oil make me fail a drug test at work?

Georgia's medical marijuana law, first passed in 2015, refers to the legal possession and use of "low-THC"

cannabis oil, which is defined as any oil containing "no more than 5 percent THC, and an amount of CBD that is equal to or greater than the THC content."

For people who are looking to enjoy the therapeutic potential of cannabis but without the psychoactive high, CBD oil can be an attractive option. But because CBD comes from both marijuana and hemp and can contain varying amounts of THC, you might be concerned that you will fail a drug test if you consume it.

The truth is that not every company makes CBD oil the same way. While some companies produce CBD oil that's completely THC-free, others formulate products that contain a slight

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The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.



Chamber of Commerce

As we recover from our Thanksgiving meal, I would like to remind everyone of the Sixth Annual Blairsville Holiday Stop & Shop this Friday, Nov. 30, and Saturday, Dec. 1, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Union County Civic Center. If you are needing a special gift for a family member or friend, come out to the Blairsville Holiday Stop & Shop. There will be over 50 home-based business vendors there to cover all your shopping needs. Admission is free.

After a long day of shopping, don't forget about the Appalachian Food and Wine Trail, which is also on Friday, Nov. 30, and Saturday, Dec. 1, from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Taste the flavors of the Appalachian Mountains by taking part in this Bi-annual Wine Tour event. Participating wineries include Paradise Hills Resort and Winery, Crane Creek Vineyards, Hightower Creek Vineyards and Odom Springs Vineyards.

The famous Kris Kringle Mountain Market is Saturday, Dec. 1, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Enjoy

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

1978 Letter to North Georgia News Published 40 years ago

Honorable Mayor (Howard O. Thomas) Blairsville, Georgia

Dear Sir,

I had the privilege of visiting your city this summer and to research records in your beautiful new court house. I was very happy to learn that the old court house will not be torn down. So much of what our ancestors worked so hard to build is indiscriminately destroyed.

My great grandfather, John Simpson Fain, was ordinary for Union County, and he also was a representative in the years of 1857-60 and 1875-76.

I visited the old Blairsville Cemetery on the school grounds, and so few markers are left standing. I found one buried under several layers of leaves and wonder how many more are lost in this fashion. I am concerned that there is not a fence around this cemetery, and that it is so open for children to romp and play over the area. Surely, there is a Boy Scout troop or concerned citizens group that would be willing to see that the few graves remaining are not desecrated any further.

Jane Adeline Addington, born 1833 and died 1861, was the wife of Col. John S. Fain (Confederate) and is my great grandmother. She

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RE: Democrats and American Socialism

Dear Editor,

The writer who respectfully requested that Americans who don't like socialism send back their Social Security checks cherry picks his government takings.

Whether we are capitalist or socialists, the government takes our wages as taxes. We paid into Social Security.

It's true that the people who benefited the most from the tax cut were the rich. During the FDR administration, they were taxed up to 90 percent of their wages (FDR unsuccessfully tried for 100 percent tax over \$25,000 income!).

Is that fair?
Those "rich" people are covering for the almost half our population that pays no taxes.

Is that fair?
Everyone should contribute to the country, not just the rich.

Socialists always try to paint the "rich" as not paying their "fair share."

Is 90 to 100 percent taxes on a person's income "fair?"

The average person should recognize that

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RC&D

November - Fall Wildfire Month

November is one of the most hazardous wildfire months here in north Georgia because of the leaf fall and normal low humidity. These conditions create a dangerous mix that only needs a spark to change the look of our communities into something that nobody wants to come to. Most houses are covered with leaves that make great wildfire fuel, and many of our residents have retreated to the warmer climates by now, so there is no one home to keep the leaves off the houses. The combination of weather and leaves for fuel makes a volatile combination that only needs one more thing to create a raging fire in our backyard, and that is a spark from an unattended burning leaf pile and a little wind. We all need to pay close attention to what's going on around us here in the mountains these days.

If you smell smoke, any smoke, check it out, call it in, and get away from it. This is the dangerous wildfire conditions that we have been warning you about for years that can quickly create the perfect wildfire storm fueled by the extremely dry weather combined with heavy leaf fall and low humidity with constant winds. This is a recipe for disaster, and all it takes to start the chain of events is one small spark.

Many wildfires are started by such simple things as the safety chains on a trailer dragging on the road, a mower hitting a rock, a power tool creating sparks, or many other seemingly harmless events that in normal weather would not be an issue. Now more than ever, we need to follow the Ready-Set-Go evacuation guidelines that our Firewise team promotes: Ready - prepare your home and property to resist fire, be Firewise; Set - be aware of changing conditions and be prepared to leave your home; Go - as soon as you suspect something is not right, Go, do not hesitate, get out of harm's (and firetrucks) way, and let the emergency folks get in and do their job to protect your life and property. The last thing you want to do is get caught in a traffic jam with flames and smoke blowing over your car, which prevents the emergency trucks getting in and you can't get out. ... not a good situation to be caught in. Water has for most of recorded history been the method of putting out fires, and in many of the areas that we live in, getting enough water to fight a fire is difficult.

Many of our fire engines can pump 1,000 gallons per minute and only carry 1,500 gallons, so the water can be gone in 1.5 minutes. In cities and towns across the United States, fire depart-

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RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



Around The Farm

Times Have Changed

My grandfather once told me that his generation had seen more change than any other generation before his time or even after his time. When Papa was little, his family's primary mode of transportation had been by wagon or train. As my grandfather grew, his family began to use the automobile. A little later, he saw his first airplane.

When my grandfather was 53, he watched men walk on the moon.

One of my Papa's earliest memories is riding with his Dad to the cotton gin in a wagon. When they got to town, they climbed off of the wagon to tie the mules to a hitching post. My 5-year-old grandfather asked his Dad, "Is that a one-eyed monster?" After his question, the object he was pointing at let out a whistle and steam rose from its belly. My grandfather remembers his Dad calming the mules and explaining to him that the one-eyed monster was actually a train. He also remembers running alongside of the first car he'd ever seen as it made its way down a wagon rutted road in front of his house.

When Papa was 15, a friend came to his house. Russell told Papa, "Coon, we need to go to town and visit Mr. Nix at the store. He has a box what you can look at and see the New York Yankees play baseball." Papa didn't believe this wild tale, but he went with Russell to town anyway. The pair entered the store just as the baseball game was ending. Papa said, "We didn't get to watch the ball game, but we sat and watched test patterns on that television for two hours. Mr. Nix finally had to ask us to leave the store so he could close it."

Papa told us that he saw an airplane for the first time when he was very small. "That plane nearly scared us to death," he explained with a chuckle. But that was nothing. President Kennedy got the United States involved in the space race during the 1960s. The people of the USA took a great amount of pride in NASA's accomplishments. So, when Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, people everywhere were glued to their television sets. Papa was extremely proud that an American made it there before the Russians. But Granny was more skeptical. She told Papa and me that those men were actually in the desert out in Arizona. She didn't believe they were there on the moon. But Papa thought they were, and he was proud to be an American.

When Papa was 15, he met his first County Agent. Papa's Dad, Lon, was well-read in agriculture and was considered to be an innovator.

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Moles and Voles

Moles and voles can be very damaging to your yard. They can dig up long tunnels through your yard and 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 their 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 also leave because they can't do a good job of digging their

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Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

Kenneth West
Publisher/Owner

Shawn Jarrard
Editor

Derek Richards
Advertising Director

Todd Forrest
Sports Editor

Mark Smith
Staff Writer

Lowell Nicholson
Photographer

Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - One Year \$40. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 10, 1981, at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

Phone: 706-745-6343 Fax: 706-745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514

Website: www.nganews.com

Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com

Mailing: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514