

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Cold Weather; Heating Issues

Although we have been breaking records this month with high temperatures, it can't last forever and winter will be on us soon. That means it's time to stay warm by heating up the home. Some people will be using fireplaces or wood heaters. Some may have already started using them during the few cool days that we have had lately. We are still in an exceptional drought and the burn ban continues. The burn ban does not restrict indoor fireplaces or heaters however there are a few issues that we would like to cover concerning these indoor heating appliances and the burn ban.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief



David Dyer

Chimney issues can always be a problem. It is always a good idea to have the chimney cleaned and inspected each year before you start your first fire. The buildup of unburnt material can clog a chimney and cause a chimney fire which could spread to the home. Hot embers from the chimney can drift to leaves on the roof or near the home which, in these dry conditions, can result in them catching fire. Chimney fires and brush fires caused by embers can endanger a home. These are a few reasons for making sure that the chimney is clean and operational.

We have responded to several calls where ashes from cleaning a fireplace or heater that have been dumped outside or misplaced which have caused a fire. If you are cleaning out a fireplace or heater, we recommend that you placed the ashes in a metal bucket that has a securable cover or lid. Place the ashes in the bucket, cool with water, secure the lid, and place the container in an area away from flammable material for a while. Once the ashes are completely cold, you may dispose of them.

Another issue is reporting smoke. With the large fires burning in the surrounding counties, there are days where we have a great deal of smoke in the area. A majority of our smoke reports in the last week have been smoke from chimneys. We are recommending and encouraging people to report outdoor burning and unusual smoke sightings due to the burn ban. The best practice for smoke reporting is if flames are seen with the smoke or if the smoke is rising in a column. These should be reported. We encourage everyone to know where the smoke is coming from before they report it.

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Our Secret Public Health Crisis

We lose nearly 130 people a day to drug overdoses. It is the leading cause of accidental death in the United States, and the loss is felt most acutely by the families left behind. By doing a better job of helping families and their addicted children, we can most effectively reduce these deaths and the accompanying pain and suffering.

The mission of the Union County Anti-Drug Coalition is to support an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

Nothing tears apart a family quite like having a child who's struggling with drugs or alcohol. Parents of these kids are usually overwhelmed by feelings of guilt, shame and fear. Will their child be alive the next morning? Are they doing everything they should to help their child? While looking for treatment options, they often find conventional wisdom from well-meaning friends and recommendations from under-trained healthcare professionals.

This is a mother's story about her two daughters. Her elder daughter developed juvenile diabetes. She was very sick, in and out of

See Drugs, page 5A

Letters to the Editor...

Feeding the Masses

Dear Editor,

A young man looked at my Toyota Tundra the other day and said, "I wonder how many people could have been fed for the money that truck cost."

I replied, "I am not sure, but it fed a lot of families in San Antonio, Texas, where it was built; it fed the people who made the tires; it fed the people who made the electronic components that went into it; it fed the people in the copper mine who mined the copper for the wires; it fed the people who made the paint that colored it and the robotic machines that sprayed it on the truck body; it fed people in Decatur, IL, at Caterpillar who built the trucks that hauled the copper ore; it fed the truckers who hauled it from the plant to the dealer; it fed the people working at the dealership and their families... but... I have to admit, I guess I really don't know how many people it fed."

George A. Mitchell

Saving Water

Dear Editor,

My wife came up with an ingenious idea since the drought is so bad which is saving us so much water. We have two, two and a half plastic buckets. We put one in the kitchen sink and the other in the shower.

We use the water we save to water our (planted before the drought) magnolia tree and other plants and garden. It's so simple. We literally put it almost under us when we shower and had no idea how much water was going down the drain.

I hope this idea catches (pardon the pun) on and helps everyone do their small part.

Chris Crawford

Traffic Signs

Dear Editor,

I know I'm wasting my time writing this because the people that don't read the speed limit signs or the stop signs, probably don't read the newspaper either.

But, here goes. I refuse to drive faster than the posted speed limit no matter how long you ride my bumper or sound your horn. I refuse to run stop signs or stop lights no matter how long you sound your horn and give me the "one finger salute". If you're in that big of a hurry, then start your trip ten minutes sooner. I've had one accident in 55 years and I don't intend to have any more.

Jerry Driskell

Post-Truth

Selecting the word of the year is a self-assigned role of the Oxford University Press. The word for 2016 is "post-truth," meaning "objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief." In other words, truth is less important than how you feel about it.

They cite the Brexit vote and the U.S. election as evidence, which might be a bit ideological, implying that facts were ignored. The raw campaign rhetoric makes me disinclined to stand for office since, well, I shoo my cat off the kitchen table. My opponent could claim I hate furry pets and should be locked up as an animal molester. Not much less absurd than post-truth spin from the 2016 campaigns.

The first time I noticed post-truth was Dan Rather's blunder that led to his resignation from CBS in 2004. While acknowledging the false evidence behind his story about George Bush's National Guard record, he insisted "that didn't change the truth of what we reported." Unproven belief became truth.

Response to science can be post-truth. Medicine tells us that a fetus is alive, genetically independent, and human, yet only her mother is a person with inalienable rights to life. Cosmogony offers interesting hypotheses for the origins of the universe, yet the evidence of an intelligent First Source must not be considered.

Apparently a culture disconnected from truth is intolerant, assumes evil motives, and prefers ad hominem over constructive disagreement. It claims to be pluralistic, embracing all truths and voices. Yet without realizing the illogic, it excludes those who know contradictory claims can't all be true. If disagreement means harm and requires safe spaces, we are raising a crippled generation unable to think critically. For our own good, the Bible urges us not to mistake the truth of God for a lie (Rom 1:25).

Vince Vitale, Director of the Zacharias Institute, observed that since Jesus is the truth (Jn. 14:6) and God is love (1 Jn. 4:8), then truth is love. One implication is that withholding truth to avoid a disagreement is not loving, and neither is a caustic argument about it. Disagreements can be loving and respectful. "Do

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. For the past few years the County did a food drive. Are you all doing this again?

A. Yes! We place large tubs at each of the county facilities for the collection of non-perishable food items. The public is more than welcome to come into any of these locations and drop off food they would like to donate. Right before the Christmas Holiday we deliver the food to the Union County Food Bank. This helps them replenish their food supply after the busy holiday season. If you have any questions or you or your business would like to make a donation please call Jennifer in my office at 706-439-6000.

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Q. I am confused. Where can I take glass to be recycled?

A. We can ONLY accept glass at the Convenience Center that is located at the intersection of Highway 325 and Highway 515. The Transfer Station and the Recycling Stations located at the voting precincts are not equipped to take glass. The cost of recycling glass is very high and by taking it only at the Convenience Center, it is giving an option for those who would like to recycle their glass. This cuts down on storage and transportation costs.

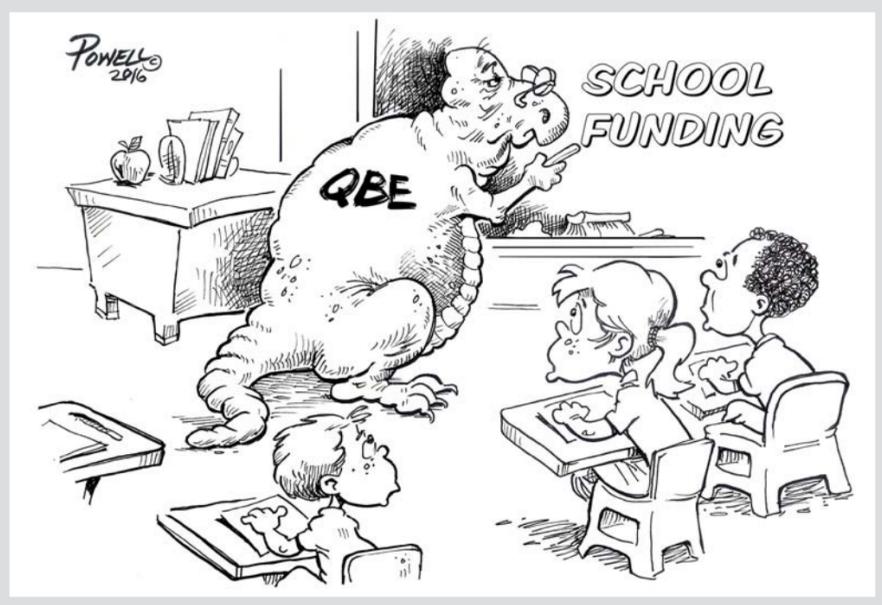
Q. Is it possible that the glass I recycle could end up in a land fill?

A. There are times when the glass recyclers will not accept glass because they have all that they can market. They will occasionally close off the market, which would mean in these cases, the company might have to dispose of the glass in a landfill. In the meantime, it at least gives you the option to continue to recycle glass and not have to pay to dispose of it. The company that we contract with, Advanced Disposal, has agreed to do this for the short-term. We are not guaranteed that accepting glass will continue, but we are working with them to help make it possible to continue.

Q. Since I can't burn my leaves and brush, is there a place I can take it to be disposed of?

A. Yes, there is. Georgia Mountain Grinding, operated by Terry Kane has agreed to accept bagged leaves and yard debris at their grinding plant that is located at 241 Grinder Road off Hay-

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Letters to the Editor...

Has Society Failed?

Dear Editor,

A lot of folks have different ideas of why our society is the way it is and this is my theory. Since prayer was taken out of schools and parents started letting their children rule the nest in the home we have seen a big decline in our young people. Granted a lot of homes still have the golden rule applied to their children, because that's the way they were raised, to respect others and others property, to not kill someone just for the fun of it or like adult youth in colleges across our country protesting, shouting hate against America and burning the American flag for the joy of it.

When there is no Christian values taught in the home by the parents then life has no purpose or meaning. Even schools and universities are not doing their job, because of regulations and parents yelling at the teachers for trying to correct the students. Schools have to have the right to give moral training and direction and discipline in order for a student to learn values that will carry them into the next phrase of life, being a responsible adult.

My heart goes out to them because as a society we have failed. Papa and Momma have failed. The school and the church have failed. We have allowed our culture to define their own destiny, their own pleasures in life and it is taking a heavy toll on our youth. Why are there so many suicides among our young people? Why are so many wandering aimlessly all over the world without a purpose for living? My friends the answer has always been here for each society to reach out too. It's called God's word, the Bible and until our society embraces God's word,

See Combs, page 5A

Graphic Photos?

Dear Editor,

Why must you print photos as well as go into graphic details and demerits of car wrecks and scenes and etc. ?

It is bad enough to grieve over the loss, but a week or so later, just as the grieving process kind of gets to the calming point, it resurfaces again as loved ones pick up a newspaper, and see it splattered within.

It is bad enough to read the obituary as well but we can do without the graphics. A simple photo of the victim while still alive and just simple details about the accident or what ever is sufficient enough without going in to the full extreme.

Brittany was our neighbor here, and we loved her very much and dearly. We watched her grow up in to a beautiful young lady.

Please be kind hearted and more considerate about future publications like this. Remember that is some one's loved one! Thank you and sincerely,
Delores Barnes

Teetotaler

I remember the days when my papa would talk to me about morals and how I should conduct myself. He especially worried about me during my college years. One of the things he continuously harped upon was the consumption of alcohol. Finally, one day I asked him, "Papa, why don't you drink?" He told me the following story.

"When I was a teenage boy we went to "Church Singings" to meet girls. That was one of the only places a girl and boy could socialize. One evening Skeeter, Russell, Pick, and a bunch of other boys were headed to St. Paul Church to a "Singing". We had a 3 mile walk to get to the church so we stopped by a bootlegger's house to get a gallon of wine. The only thing we could afford was some home-made Elderberry Wine. Seven of us boys drank that whole gallon of wine before we got to church.

That "singing" turned into a long drawn out affair. Normally a singing would last 2-3 hours. This one lasted nearly 4 hours and I was feeling the need to go to the outhouse.

However, I knew if I got up to leave I would get a whipping. My parents were not there, but, that didn't matter. In those days any parent would give you a whipping for being disrespectful in church. So, me and the boys just sat there. By the end of the service we were hurting.

When the preacher dismissed the service I got up and ran out the door. When I got to the safety of the bushes I was in for trouble. That Elderberry wine does something to your insides.

I was burning inside and the more I went the more I needed to go. That was an awful experience. I swore off alcohol of any kind after that night. Also, drinking alcohol can get you into all kinds of trouble. So, I don't want you to ever drink anything. I am a "Teetotaler" and I want you to be one as well."

Even to this day I don't drink, at least intentionally. Five years ago I began to can a few things out of the garden. One of the first things I tried was tomato juice. One day I decided to try to make some V-10 juice. I am one of those people who tinker with recipes. So, I found some bell pepper, cabbage, peas, celery, hot pepper, onions, carrots, tomatoes, apples, pears, blueberries and grapes to mix into the juice. After canning the concoction I let it sit for a few months. When I opened the first bottle the stuff fizzed and foamed. I was concerned so I sent a bottle to the Food Science Department at UGA to have it analyzed. A few days later I received a phone call from a friend. I answered the call and she was laughing. She said, "Mickey, you have made some really good Tomato Wine".

My father's Uncle Dennis was a man who loved to drink his moonshine and he was one of those people that became instantly happy when

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Crop Rotation

Though we may not need to plant our gardens for several months, these cold fall and winter days are the perfect time to start planning for next year's crop. Many of us have a few plants that we're particularly fond of and grow every year: tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, corn, and so many more. While it is no problem to plant your favorite vegetables every year, planting them in the same areas can lead to pest and soil issues, so it is important to plan out a rotation strategy well before it is time to plant.

Crop rotation is one of the most important aspects of maintaining good production. Many of the vegetables that do well in our area are closely related, and planting crops from the same family in the same plot every year can lead to a multitude of issues. To design your rotation scheme, you need to first determine what you want to grow, and if any of those plants are in the same family. Peppers, tomatoes, potatoes and eggplants are all "solanaceous" plants belonging to the nightshade family. Cabbage, kale, broccoli and Brussels sprouts are all in the cabbage family. Cucumbers, squash, and pumpkins are all cucurbits, and peas, beans and peanuts are legumes. These are just some of the main groupings that are important to rotate. There are many more depending on how varied your your garden to be.

Rotating your crops helps immensely with both disease management and soil nutrition. Closely related plants are often susceptible to the same diseases. Even though one year you may plant tomatoes in a row and potatoes in that row the next year, your potatoes will likely have the same diseases and pests your tomatoes had. This is because despite planting a different crop, the plants are still closely related so you did not truly rotate your garden. Plants in the same family also have similar nutrient requirements. Planting different groups of vegetables in different plots every year allows the soil to replenish some nutrients as others are used up. Some crops, such as legumes condition the soil by adding nitrogen. You should always wait at least three years before planting a vegetable family in the same plot.

Your crop rotation plan can be as simple or complex as you want. Many home gardeners divide their gardens into sub plots that are rotated every three to four years, leave it fallow after harvest, and plant again in spring. However, introducing cover crops such as clover or rye while your plots are unused can prevent erosion and add nutrients back into the soil. In the spring, they can also be crimped down to form a weed barrier for your summer and fall crops, or be added into the soil to increase organic matter. You can also introduce companion plants, such as herbs or flowers. These plants increase ben-

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Tour of Trees

Christmas will be here soon and with that, the Chamber of Commerce will again be hosting the Tour of Trees at the Union County Community Center. This annual event is a lot of fun for our local businesses and civic organizations to show off their creative side by decorating a large tree, small tree, or a wreath. I would like to say a special thank you to North Georgia Technical College for donating additional trees to the Chamber to use for this event.

The trees and wreaths will be on display throughout the entire month of December. Stop by anytime to explore and enjoy. People's choice winners will be voted on and awarded at our Holly Jolly Christmas event on December 10th. Winners will be announced in each category. We would like to say a special thank you to our

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Regina Allison



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

Kenneth West
Owner/Publisher

Charles Duncan
Editor

Derek Richards
Advertising Director

Todd Forrest
Staff Writer

Shawn Jarrard
Staff Writer

Lily Avery
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 - 1 Year \$35.00. 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, 1987 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, GA 30514

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