Opinions

Letters to the Editor

Our Hometown Hero

Dear Editor,

Our dog passed away Wednesday night about 10 o'clock. We WERE going to go to the Emergency Vet in Blue Ridge about 9:30 but could not move our 82 pound Henry down the stairs to our car. We are both senior citizens, so in desperation, I called 911.

The dispatcher said that she would send an officer right out to our home in Blairsville. She told us to turn on all of our outdoor lights, so we did. I stayed close to our dog and my husband waited for your Deputy to arrive.

It was then that Officer Jose Carvajal (Badge # 222) came into our lives. He immediately knelt down over Henry to monitor his breathing. Henry passed away in his arms so our loving dog knew that he was not alone. Officer Carvajal expressed his sympathy and continued to hold Henry. I explained that Henry was an amazing companion who had led a charmed life. I went on to say, "BUT it is you, sir, who has done something for us that no one could have handled any better."

He went on to explain that it would be his honor to carry Henry to our van in the garage. He did that with ease even though I could not watch him lift our wonderful pet off the floor and head for the stairs. The officer and my husband laid Henry on garbage bags in the back of the van. He then stayed with us for a long time reviewing our options at that point. He wanted to be sure that we were OK, and his counseling was meaningful and calming.

I cannot tell you how much we appreciate you having that caliber of person on your staff. He is our version of a Hometown Hero.

Be thankful that you live in Blairsville! Peg and Bob Schneider

Seeking Transparency

Dear Editor,

I have just received a response from the Union County lawyer about the ORRs (Open Records Request) that I had presented to the Superior Court Clerk, Judy Odom. With this request I had copies of these given to the three Superior Court Judges George, Levins and Parks. These ORRs were for copies (no originals) of the paper ballots of the Nov. 3, 2020, and the May 24, 2022, elections.

Instead of three-day response time I was given a 30-to-45-day response time.

I received a word salad from the attorney that did not, I repeat, did not address the ORR that I had written. Instead, it had all to do with getting access to the original paper ballots not the copies and the destruction of them. Now, I know that I need a court order to get access to the original ballots, but I did not need one if I never had access to the original ones, if only the Superior Court Clerk and her co-workers have access to these ballots in their storeroom. I also know that it would be unlawful for me to have "possession" of these original ballots. I am not ignorant. It is not unlaw-

See Lodes page 5A

Refusing Responsibility

Dear Editor,

Biden is up to his old tricks again. Nearly every problem that America is facing has happened under his watch from day one. He doesn't speak about the problems because he isn't going to fix them. From inflation, border crisis (and it is a crime), catch and release bail, student loan debt, deadly drugs like fentanyl killing people in America from China and the cartels, car-jackings and attacking/beating innocent men and women in the streets, and not supporting law enforcement. You say law enforcement needs reform; what about criminals that have outstanding warrants? They resist arrest with knives and guns or just resist arrest and try to drive away with law enforcement hanging out the door. Criminals give good reason for law enforcement to react with force because their lives are in danger, too.

Biden loves name-calling. He blames the Republicans for all his problems, or Trump.

See Thompson, page 5A

Everybody has one...

Pursuit of God

A. W. Tozer's "The Pursuit of God" reveals a pastor's heart. "I want deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God," he writes. I share his purpose here.

So much competes for our time and focus. In this smart phone-social media age, it's drivel that competes for our clicks. The algorithms know what you pursue by keeping up

with your clicks and offering you more of the same. When you take stock, you realize you aren't pursuing your true longings. Tozer was speaking to be-

lievers who know what matters - a relationship with God through Christ Jesus – but do not act as

though it is a lifelong pursuit. "The whole transaction of religious conversion has been made mechanical and spiritless," he writes. "The man is 'saved,' but he is not hungry nor thirsty after God." God has revealed Himself to be a Person, and you are made in His image. You can learn what He thinks, desires, enjoys, and loves. He communicates with your soul through the avenues of your mind and emotions. He uses Scripture, prayer, and other believers to intensify your desire for Him. Join the pursuit!

Moses asked, "Let me know Your ways that I may know you," (Exo. 33:13) and that was after he met God on the mountain. David cried out, "Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth" (Psa. 73:25). Paul was blunt. "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:8). History tells stories of believers who lived lives of joy amidst sacrifice, consequence despite failings, and focus over distraction because they fanned the flames of their desire for God.

Pursuing that desire has a simple result. "The man who has God for his treasure," Tozer writes, "has all satisfaction, all pleasure, all delight ... and he has it purely, legitimately, and forever.'

"Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psa. 37:3-4).



Commissioner's Questions

Q. Where is the War Memorial located in Union **County?**

A. It is located at the intersection of War Memorial Street and 15 School Circle. From the downtown Historic Courthouse, travel South on Cleveland St for One Block and turn left on War Memorial St and follow it two blocks until you approach the War Memorial just across the intersec-

tion Q. I have never seen the memorial. Is there a sign where to turn off the highway? A. Yes, there is a sign just on



your left where you make the turn to the Memorial and see the directions from above

Q. What wars does the memorial include.

A. It includes those who lost their lives from Union County during each War and their names are engraved in granite. The Wars included in the Memorial are Afghanistan, Iraq, Persian Gulf, Vietnam, Korean, WWI, WWII, Civil War, Mexican War, War of 1812, Indian Wars, American Revolution, and the Spanish American War.

Q. Is there one time better than another to visit the site?

A. It is open and lighted 24/7. It has a special feel anytime you are there, but in addition to seeing it in the daytime, I especially enjoy seeing it at night and I think some of you will also enjoy that.

Q. Who built the War Memorial and when?

A. It was built in 1995. Roy Hamby was the Veterans Affairs Director and got the project started with help from others including David Friedly who helped come up with the names that are engraved on the stones. Also, 600 people in our community donated small amounts of funds including clubs, churches, organizations, individuals and families and others.

Q. How much did it cost to build the structure?

A. Appx \$ 80,000 was raised to build the structure with an additional \$40,000 of in-kind labor to clear and grade the site. It was a total community effort.

Q. Are there special events held at the War Memorial?

See Paris, page 5A

Chamber of Commerce

During the past week we have received several calls regarding the moratorium on shortterm rentals in Union County about how it is currently impacting the County, and how it will in the future. For those who are not familiar with the short-term rentals, I would refer you to the

excellent article written in the North Georgia News for the July 27 edition. The number of short-term rentals in our County has



more than doubled over the last several years, and the 180-day moratorium was put in place to give the County a chance to get a handle on this growth.

As a Chamber we support tourism in our County. As of 2021, based on information received from Explore Georgia, tourism-supported activities brought in \$102 million to the local economy, directly impacting 818 tourism jobs (\$18.9 in labor income). Revenue derived from tourism allowed the County to maintain its position as having the second lowest tax rate in the

See Chamber, page 5A

Cover Crops

Planting cover crops year after year provides many benefits to the soil. Let's talk a little more about what a cover crop is, why you should plant one, and how to go about doing that.

A cover crop is a crop that you plant to cover the ground. (How's that for using the word



The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has announced "Fire Won't Wait. Plan Your Escape" as the theme for Fire Prevention Week, which takes place October 9-15. This theme reinforces the critical importance of developing a home escape plan with all members of the household and practicing it RC&D regularly. In ad-Executive Director dition, this October represents the Frank 100th anniversary of Fire Prevention Riley Week, the nation's

Fred McGhee was a coon hunting ma-

chine. He hunted six or seven nights a week, 52 weeks of every year. Fred was extraordinarily poor, and a large portion of his income came from the hides he captured through coon hunting. Fred had a large family which required a lot



Don't Donate Trash

Dear Editor,

Over the last few months I have been volunteering at one of several charitable Thrift Stores, and to say the least, I am appalled at what some people think are donations.

Many are using the donation process rather than paying for the disposal of trash. Small appliances that aren't working and broken or just so filthy no one would purchase them. In one instance, a crockpot was full of moldy food. TVs are donated that don't work, left after cover of darkness when told we didn't take non-working TVs. Filthy, dirty clothes – one bag of donated clothes included dirty diapers.

Now think of the expense of the employees and volunteer hours that are wasted sorting this trash. Also, the expense of disposing of these so-called donations.

All get donations that are sellable and

See Brassel, page 5A

Let the People Decide

Dear Editor,

Last evening (Sept. 8), I had the opportunity to hear our Sole Commissioner speak at a meeting of the Union County Democrat Party held in an open public venue. The agenda reported that he was going to speak about the Board of Commissioner petition for a referendum.

Before speaking, the commissioner noticed a media person there and informed an official that he would not speak if there were any recordings of his talk. He then used his time to defame those citizens who are exercising their right to petition the government, criticized newcomers/taxpayers to the community, those wanting to improve the county by having a Board of Commissioners instead of one Ruler of the county. He also belittled the media person and a Republican guest who came to hear what he had to say and implied that the guest had no right to be there or speak because he was not a Democrat.

Most of what the Sole Commissioner said about the Petition and petitioners was dangerously misleading and, in fact, lies. He spent the remainder of his time talking about how great he is. Folks, this is why Union County needs to end the unethical rule of one person controlling all aslongest-running public health observance on record

"This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign capitalizes on its milestone anniversary, celebrating all we've accomplished in reducing the public's risk to fire over the past hundred years," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of the NFPA Outreach and Advocacy division. "At the same time, the theme, 'Fire Won't Wait. Plan Your Escape,' addresses challenges that remain." According to NFPA data, home - the place people feel safest from fire — is actually where they are at greatest risk, with three-quarters (74 percent) of all U.S. fire deaths occurring in homes. When a home fire does occur, it's more likely to be serious; people are more likely to die in a home fire today than they were in 1980. "Today's homes burn faster and hotter than they used to, minimizing the amount of time they have to escape safely, said Carli. "In a typical home fire, you may have as little as two minutes to get out from the time the smoke alarm sounds.'

The theme "Fire Won't Wait. Plan Your Escape" promotes potentially life-saving messages that can mean the difference between life and death in a fire. Developing a home escape plan with all members of the household and practicing it regularly ensures that everyone knows what to do when the smoke alarm sounds and uses that time wisely.

Following are key messages behind this year's theme: Make sure your home escape plan meets the needs of all your family members, including those with sensory or physical disabilities. Smoke alarms should be installed inside every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of your home. Smoke alarms should be interconnected so when one sounds, they all sound. Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows open easily. Have an outside meeting place a safe distance from your home where everyone should meet. Practice your home fire drill at least twice a year with everyone in the household, including See Riley, page 5A

of food, and his reg ular job of logging just would not pay for all the food required by his family. At least that was his excuse for all the time spent in the

Around The Farm Mickey Cummings

woods away from his wife and children.

Fred was also described by many in our little community as a "big blow." Fred was adept at making you think that he was better than anyone else at almost anything. He had better dogs, better hunting territory and was more knowledgeable about the woods than anyone else. Even with all that was known about his bragging, Fred was well liked and people enjoyed his company on a hunting trip. My Dad said that he enjoyed hunting with Fred because he was entertaining and fun to listen to.

One night in August, Dad set up a hunting trip with Uncle Mack, Uncle Rufus and Fred. They decided to hunt over in the "Section." This area is now a part of the Bankhead National Forest close to Double Springs, Alabama. The area is drained by the Sipsey River which eventually feeds into the Black Warrior River. The topography of the "Section" is comprised of rolling hills with the occasional deep hollow. At one time there were many farms located in the area. But, during the Depression many of these marginal land farms had been abandoned. The federal government came in during the 1930s and bought up all these old farms and created the national forest.

On this particular hot and sultry night in August, these three men and my Dad, who was a teenager, walked far back into the area to the treeing dogs. A treeing dog has spent some time trailing a raccoon to a tree. When the coon climbs the tree the dog comes to the tree and blows out a different type of bark than when the coon is still on the ground. Anyway, when the four people came to their dogs, they knew there was a problem. The raccoon had climbed a massive Tulip Poplar. The coon was hiding in the top of the tree amongst all the leaves, and to make matters worse, the trunk of the poplar was covered with gigantic Poison Ivy vines. The men could not find the coon, and normally, Dad would climb the tree to find the animal. However, Dad didn't want to develop a bad rash from the Poison Ivy. So, three of them began gathering their dogs to leave the scene.

in the definition? Most of the time cover crops are planted in the fall and grow through the winter to be terminated in spring before you plant your garden.



There are summer cover crops that can be grown. but I'm going to focus on winter cover crops, because of the time of year right now. Typically, a cover crop is a cereal grain (e.g. rye, or wheat), brassica (e.g. forage turnip or wild radish), or a legume (e.g. clover or vetch). You can also plant combinations of the three.

Cover crops benefit soil health in a multitude of ways. One of those is that cover crops help build organic matter in the soil. A cover crop like rye produces a lot of biomass, when that biomass is tilled into the soil before spring planting, it gives the microbes in the soil material to work on to turn into organic matter. Because of the rainfall and heat that we have in the southeast, organic matter will decompose faster than it's created. Therefore giving those soil microbes materials to turn into organic matter will allow you to increase your organic matter over time.

Cover crops also reduce erosion. After pulling the crops that you had planted in the summer the soil may be left bare. A cover crop will protect that soil, and hold it in place to keep it from washing away. Cover crops can also reduce weeds. Some crops like rye will release chemicals that are like a natural herbicide. You can also use cover crops as a natural mat, that blocks sunlight, and so make it more difficult for weeds to grow. Certain cover crops like brassicas that produce a large taproot can be used to alleviate compaction. That large taproot will break up the soil and can penetrate hard layers in the soil.

All of these attributes make cover crops very beneficial to the soil. So how do you grow a cover crop? The ideal time to plant a cover crop is between Labor Day and mid October. If you're planting a cereal grain, you'll want to plant 3-4 pounds of seed per 1000 square feet. Brassicas need 1-2 pounds of seed per 1000 square feet. Legumes need a quarter pound per 1000 square feet because the seeds are very small. Legumes are able to fix nitrogen because they have a symbiotic relationship with bacteria. Therefore, it's important to inoculate your soil with the appropriate bacteria if you're putting out legumes. Allow the cover crop to grow throughout the See Williams, page 5A

See **Harper**, page 5A

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Paris... continued from Page 4A

A. Each year a Memorial Day service is held there – immediately following the Memorial Day parade.

Q. Are all branches of the military represented at the War Memorial?

A. Yes. As a matter of fact, lighted flags fly at the memorial – representing all branches of military. Q. How many names rial? A. There are 158 names engraved on the memorial.

are engraved on the memo-

Q. Who do those names represent?

A. At the time the memorial was constructed, the names represented all known soldiers from Union County who lost their lives serving their country during times of war.

Riley... continued from Page 4A

guests. Practice at least once during the day and at night.

As the biggest annual campaign at NFPA, Fire Prevention Week works to educate people about the leading risks to home fires and ways they can better protect themselves and their loved ones. Local fire departments play a key role in bringing Fire Prevention Week to life in their communities each year and spreading basic but critical fire safety messages. Join NFPA in celebrating the 100th anniversary of Fire Prevention Week (FPW)

This year's FPW campaign, "Fire won't wait. Plan your escape," works to educate everyone about simple but important actions they can take to keep themselves and those around them safe from home fires. You may have as little as two minutes (or even less time) to safely escape a home fire from the time the smoke alarm sounds. Your ability to get out of a home during a fire depends on early warning from smoke alarms and advance planning. Fire Prevention Week was started by the NFPA in 1922 to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

In 1925, President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed the first National Fire Prevention Week to occur from October 4th through October 10th, 1925. President Calvin Coolidge stated that, "This waste results from the conditions which justify a sense of shame and horror; for the greater part of it could and ought to be prevented... It is highly desirable that every effort be made to reform the conditions which have made possible so vast a destruction of the national wealth."

The Great Chicago Fire burned between October 8th to October 10th, with most of the damage done on October 9th. The fire caused roughly \$200 million in damages, killing around 300 people, and destroying over 17,000 buildings and structures. The consequences were more than just fire damage itself; The fire was said to have started when a cow kicked over a lantern in the O'Leary barn in the southwest side of the city. Today, the Chicago Fire Department Training Academy is located on the site of the O'Leary property where the fire started.

Did you know that there was a fire that occurred during the same time frame as the Great Chicago Fire in 1871? On October 8, 1871, the Peshtigo Fire swept through northeast Wisconsin. The Peshtigo Fire is the most devastating forest fire in American history, claiming 1,200 lives and scorched 1.2 million acres. The damage estimate was at \$169 million for the time, which would equate to over 38 billion dollars in 2022."

Take some time to visit firepreventionweek.org to learn more about National Fire Prevention Week. The life you save might be yours or someone in your family!

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

State of Georgia. The moratorium was not imposed to limit short-term rental activity, but to ensure the health, well-being, and safety of our visitors and residents while in Union County. It also provided time to research any impact on property owners and surrounding properties who have received feedback from first responders and to hear recommendations from

law enforcement. Please be sure to go to www.visitblairsvillega.com to

Brassel... continued from Page 4A

learn about why we are such a fantastic destination and attraction to visitors. Our views are magnificent, the downtown is thriving, our festivals and events are in demand, we can't blame anyone for wanting to be here!

Thanks to all that help make Life Better in Blairs-ville!

Lodes... continued from Page 4A

ful for me to have "copies" of the ballots which I have been refused.

But what I do understand about the refusal to grant this ORR is that all parties to these elections have much to lose if we the people get the transparency that we want so that we the people can make better and more informed decisions on who and what we want our government to do.

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

As Dad was leashing his dog, he noticed Fred sitting down and taking off his shoes. Dad looked at his friend as if he were crazy and asked, "You're not climbing that tree, are you?" Fred stood up and took off his shirt. He looked at Dad and said, "I am not allergic to this stuff." Then he grabbed a handful of the Ivy leaves and rubbed them all over his chest. He even stuck a few leaves up is nose just for good measure.

Then he wrapped his toes and hands around the enormous Poison Ivy Vine and shot up that tree like it was a foot stool. He located the coon and poked him out of the tree with a long stick, and after hitting the ground, the old coon was dispatched by the dogs. The long-legged old man then wrapped his arms and legs around the big old Poplar and shinnied down the tree like it was a fire house pole. Upon hitting the ground, he skinned the coon and wrapped the carcass in newspaper.

Nothing on the animal went to waste. Each animal captured that evening went home to Fred's family and was baked with sweet potatoes. And they needed each animal, because by Wednesday the next week, Fred was in the hospital with the worst case of Poison Ivy rash old Doc Underwood had ever seen. The old man even had the rash up his nose. After 10 days or so, he was back hunting in his usual style. He knew more than anyone else about the Bankhead Forest and the Freedom Hills of northern Alabama. But, he never shinned up one of those Yellow Poplars again if it had one of those hairy Poison Ivy Vines.

Williams... continued from Page 4A

winter. Depending on the cover crop that you use, you may need to add some fertilizer. Two to three weeks before planting your summer plants, you'll need to terminate the cover crop by cutting it and tilling it into the soil.

If you have questions about cover crops contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@ uga.edu.

I am hosting program on Georgia Ginseng on October 3rd via webinar from 6–8 pm. If you are interested in attending you can register at this link. https:// ugeorgia.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/ form/SV_5aUUKTwfeao23ZQ

Harper... continued from Page 4A

pects of the county and change to a Board of Commissioners like the other 152 Georgia counties. I found his behavior to be repulsive and embarrassing. I have since learned there were several recordings made of his defamatory and belittling remarks. In conclusion, my question to Mr. Sole Commissioner is, "If you are so confident that one ruler is best for Union County, why not put the question of One vs. Board of Commissioners on referendum yourself and let we the people decide?" **Maureen Harper**

the public wants to buy. Those items are greatly appreciated and all organizations are grateful for them. But dumping trash is just not acceptable!

So, those of you who are using these organizations as dumping grounds for your trash under the guise of donations, stop and think what you are doing. **Jessie Brassel**

Now I need to do a court order for this information. **Marsha Lodes**

New Bivalent Covid-19 Boosters offer enhanced protection



The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) will begin offering the new bivalent COVID-19 booster this week, as shipments of the vaccine arrive in the state. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommend the bivalent booster manufactured by Pfizer for individuals aged 12 and older; and they recommend the bivalent booster by Moderna for adults aged 18 and older.

The current COVID booster doses contain the genetic recipe for the original strain of COVID-19. The bivalent vaccine contains the genetic recipes for two versions of COVID-19; the original strain, plus the omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5, offering better protection against the currently circulating COVID-19 variants. People should wait at least two months after completing their initial vaccination or their last booster shot before getting the bivalent booster.

At this time, the bivalent vaccine is considered only a booster. It is not to be used as the initial two-dose COVID vaccine. The monovalent mRNA CVOID-19 vaccines will still be administered for the primary series of vaccine and as a booster for children under the age of 12.

Georgia is currently seeing an average of 3,000 cases of COVID reported a week. More than 89% of newly reported COVID cases are caused by the BA.5 variant. Hospitalizations and deaths from COVID continue to decrease in the state.

In addition to vaccination and boosters, basic prevention measures should also be followed to help prevent further spread of COVID and mitigate outbreaks of infection, especially in public settings: wear a mask, physically distance, and wash your hands frequently with soap and water.

For updates on COVID-19 follow @GaDPH and @ GovKemp on Twitter and @ GaDPH and @GovKemp on Facebook. For more information on vaccination and boosters, visit https://itsthatsimplega.ga.gov/.

Veterans Thrift Store Volunteers

Veterans Thrift Store, a product of Club 66, 2641 Hwy. 66, Young Harris, GA is open from 10 AM to 4 PM, Wednesday thru Saturday, helping local veterans in our community. We are looking for volunteers to help with the thrift store.

We are accepting gently used items: furniture, appliances, toys, clothes, etc. For details call 706-379-3774.

Thompson... continued from Page 4A

Trump has been out of the picture for a while, and it's not Putin's fault, either. We are not terrorists, a cult or an enemy of the state, but he calls us Fascism MAGA Voters. He uses fear and intimidation. He wants you to believe him because he wants your vote, and he has done this before. He thinks you are not smart enough to figure out what he is doing and why. Your vote should not be for sale at any price.

We have to stand confident on what we believe as Americans, because this will affect everyone. Please, please pray for our country. God Bless the United States of America, and get out and vote in this election. Georgia is counting on you.

Charlotte Thompson

Blue Ridge Mountain Conservation District meeting

The regular meeting of the Blue Ridge Mountain Conservation District will be held 9/16/2022 at 10 AM at the Harrelson Memorial Civic Center, 165 Wellborn Street, Blairsville GA 30512.

For additional information please call 706-745-2794 x3.