

Opinions

A love of baseball and YHC

All the years Zell Miller was in Atlanta, and Washington, D.C., he was an avid Atlanta Braves fan. His wife Shirley was right by his side and just as rabid of a fan.

Today, long removed from Atlanta and Washington, (the many years he served as lieutenant governor, governor, and his stay as a U.S. Senator), Zell and Shirley are just as much Braves fans today as they have been over the years.

Last week was a special treat for both. Charlie Blackmon, the All-Star center fielder for the Colorado Rockies, and Nick Markakis, the Braves' Gold Glove outfielder and hitting star, went head-to-head at SunTrust Park.

Zell and Shirley were glued to the T.V.

Nick "the Stick" Markakis collected six hits during the four-game series, including a home run and three RBIs. Blackmon collected five hits, including a home run and two RBIs in the four-game set.

Both are outstanding players, and both are outstanding men. And both are alumni of Young Harris College. It was interesting to watch for both Zell and Shirley, both of whom attended Young Harris College.

In fact, Zell Miller was the first baseball coach at Young Harris College. Today, the Mountain Lions' home field bears the name Zell B. Miller Field.

Zell Miller started YHC's baseball program in 1960 and coached the team for three winning seasons. It was a thrill for both Zell and Shirley to watch Markakis and Blackmon go head-to-head.

When Nick "the Stick" signed with the Braves three seasons ago, I wrote a column to let Braves fans know that it was money well spent. I added that it would be grand if they also could acquire Charlie Blackmon from the Rockies.

Markakis has been nothing but first class in his tenure with the Braves. A solid glove in the outfield (two Gold Gloves in his career trophy case), the Man from Woodstock has been a breath of fresh air during the Braves slide from greatness.

Markakis has driven in 203 runs in his two-plus seasons in

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Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Everybody has one...

Jerusalem of the East

I hope the war of words between the U.S. and North Korea cools off. Secretary of Defense James Mattis said that a war would be catastrophic. I assume he was thinking about all affected parties, including the oppressed people under the rule of Kim Jong-Un. That said, history reveals what the real battle is here.

Horace Underwood (of the typewriter family) began his work in 1885 as one example of many early Christian missionaries that worked in Korea. In 1907, a revival in the country set off three decades of growth for Christianity despite Japanese influence in the country and their resistance to the faith. Rejecting the Japanese demand to worship their emperor, many Koreans embraced faith in Jesus Christ instead.

By the 1930s, Christians were the civic and intellectual leaders in Pyongyang, which had become known as the "Jerusalem of the East." (Ruth Bell Graham attended high school in Pyongyang while her parents worked in China.) After WWII, the rise of communism drove Christians to the South. Many stayed in the North where the Soviet Union installed Kim Il Sung as leader of communist party. Diverging somewhat from the atheistic communism of the 20th C., he demanded nothing less than worship from the people, under pain of death. His grandson now rules the country, having been taught all his life that he is a god to be adored.

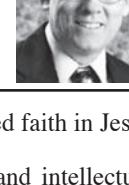
The result? North Korea tops watch lists for evil, repressive regimes. Christians whose grandparents refused to worship the Japanese emperor now refuse to worship the "dear leader." They meet in underground churches or attempt escape at risk of beating, starvation, cold exposure, rape, exile to hard labor camp, and execution. History repeats itself. In ancient Babylon, three Jewish lads refused to worship the king. Threatened with death, they replied, "Our God is able to deliver us, but even if He does not, we are not going to worship the golden image" (Dan. 3:17-18). As faith views eternity, it says, "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him" (Job 13:15).

Open Doors, a ministry to persecuted Christians, reports

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. How do I know if my neighbors junk would be classified as a junkyard?

A. In the ordinance that specifically relates to junkyards, a junkyard is defined as five (5) or more junked vehicles. This means they have no current license plate and are partially dismantled or unable to be moved in the manner it was originally intended. For example, if your neighbor has two mustangs in his driveway that he is rebuilding, this does not qualify as a junkyard. For more information on how to define a junkyard you can look at the Union County code 38-82 which you can find on our web site at www.unioncountygta.gov.

Q. Does the amount of junk on a piece of property matter?

A. For a yard full of junk materials, such as washers, dryers, and other junk, the junk material has to equal 600 square feet or more for it to be considered a junkyard. This would be an area that would be 30 feet long by 20 feet wide.

Q. Were some of the junkyards grandfathered in when the ordinance was written?

A. Junkyards in existence before August 25, 2005 were grandfathered in. If any changes are made, like new junk being brought in or additional junk cars being added, then these property owners must comply with the ordinance and get a permit for a junkyard.

Q. What exactly do you mean when you say they were grandfathered in?

A. It means that legally, they already had a business established when the ordinance was adopted, and therefore you cannot go back and change it and cause them harm.

Q. Someone in our neighborhood is building a house, and has building materials piled around. Can the county do something about this?

A. Absolutely not! Construction materials do not fall under the junkyard ordinance. Items that are on someone's property for the purpose of repairing the home or completing construction projects are perfectly fine to be there. Also, materials that are being used to operate a business are not considered junk either and

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Anti-Drug Coalition

The number of U.S. workers testing positive for illegal drugs has reached its highest level in a decade, according to a new study. Quest Diagnostics, one of the nation's largest medical-screening laboratories, surveyed more than 11 million drug tests over the last three years and found that the percentage of workers testing positive for illicit drugs has risen steadily over the past three years, increasing to 4 percent in 2015 after decades of decline.

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. Visit and Like our Facebook page for additional articles and videos.

Pulling data from more than 9.5 million urine, 900,000 oral fluid, and 200,000 hair laboratory-based tests that were performed by Quest for employers in 2015, the study found that usage rates of amphetamines, marijuana, and heroin have all increased in the past five years in the general workforce.

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Letters to the Editor

Which laws apply to you?

Dear Editor,

I live in a small neighborhood on a mountain top in Blairsville. In our neighborhood, there is a 4-way stop. I have noticed on many occasions, cars coming in at a fast rate of speed, that never even slow down at the stop signs, recently causing a near miss for me after I had stopped and was pulling into the intersection.

I know there may not be much traffic, but it is the law that every car stop. Yesterday, (8-15) a Windstream truck blew through the intersection, without slowing down. It was only by chance I had stopped, then waited for him to run through.

I began to think, of how we all are guilty of picking and choosing which and how many laws apply to us... which we will choose to follow, and which we will ignore. We also are guilty of doing that with God's Laws and commands. If we don't like something, or don't quite agree, we simply ignore it. Political correctness has dictated which way many people follow, ignoring what our God and Creator has mandated.

This can, and will ultimately cause problems, as all laws are there for our benefit, hap-

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A good man at the center of tragedy

Dear Editor,

I wonder how many of the protesters or counter-protesters know anything about the bronze statue of Robert E. Lee sitting atop his horse in Emancipation Park? It has been there almost 100 years, and now some Charlottesville politicians and others think it should come down. Why? Because it offends some people.

It is the right of Charlottesville city officials to decide what happens to that statue, but I wonder how much they know about Robert E. Lee. Read the following quote by General Lee and decide for yourself if that statue is just a piece of bronze, green with years of oxidation, that should be thrown away:

"I am rejoiced that Slavery is abolished. I believe it will be greatly for the interest of the South. So fully am I satisfied of this, that I would have cheerfully lost all that I have lost by the war, and have suffered all that I have suffered to have this object attained."

I hope the protesters and counter-protesters and city officials and every American will take a few minutes to learn something about this extraordinary man. I suggest a book by Charles Flood called *Lee - The Last Years*. If you read it, you will see how misguided the Charlottesville city officials are for seeking to remove that statue.

John Ripma,
Blairsville

Firewise

The Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council promotes projects that help the citizens of the 13 counties in Northeast Georgia improve their lives, standard of living and promotes economic development. What better way to accomplish this goal than to make the people's homes, businesses, property, and lives safe from uncontrolled wildfire.

In 2013, the Council was one of the original 8 Fire Adapted Communities pilot projects and is now the Southeastern hub and administrator for the Fire Adapted Communities Network in our part of the country. Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) is not a traditional program but really a way of life, an umbrella against wildfire where all emergency agencies and citizens who live in the county have a role to play in their own safety against Wildfire.

The Council is also the Georgia Firewise Liaison with responsibility for the Firewise program in all 159 Georgia counties. This broad role helps recruit more communities that want to protect their property (and lives) by reducing their risk of wildfire. Since our Fire Adapted Communities project was started, Towns County has reduced its wildfire calls by 75 percent with only 9 wildfires in the past 3 years which is about 6% of what the surrounding counties experienced.

This shows that the Firewise and Fire Adapted efforts are paying real rewards, and these programs are easy, fun, and can pay huge dividends by saving your property. The Firewise USA Recognition Program has been one of my main themes for the past several years and for good reason, it empowers citizens to do things that can help them save their property, their stuff, their cat, dogs, and maybe even their lives.

The Firewise program in Towns County is leading Georgia in the number of certified Firewise Communities with 21 nationally certified communities and 8 more in process. Georgia has a total of 101 Firewise Communities making Towns County a major player in the Georgia and National Firewise program and the results show it.

Firewise is one of the components and cornerstone of Fire Adapted communities. The success of this program is due to the close cooperation of our agency partners; Towns Commissioner, Georgia Forestry Commission, US Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, Towns Fire Rescue, Watershed Training Center, and most of all, you the citizens who rec-

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Speck Fishing

One of my favorite enjoyments is what is called "Speck Fishing." Speckled Trout derive their name from the colorful specks that cover their body. In other parts of our country the fish are called "Brook Trout" or "Brookies." The fish generally require cold, clean water and they do not tolerate "Rainbow Trout" well. These tend to prey upon the Specks. These little fish are Georgia's only native trout. As a matter of fact when John Muir traveled through Trackrock Gap all those years ago he noticed many smaller Trout in the creeks in the area. Later it was determined these minnows were actually Specks.

Since that time the territory of our native Speckled Trout has decreased significantly. The introduction of Rainbow Trout and the development of much of our land have both decreased our water quality and placed extraordinary pressure upon our only native trout.

Now to catch this species you must travel into the high coves and above waterfalls underneath many of our high mountains. My good friend Patrick Fix loves to Speck fish as much as I and this is a story from his childhood.

Patrick, his cousin and his father, Bill Fix, were Speck fishing somewhere around Blue Mountain. Patrick said, "I can still remember watching Dad walk through the rhododendron thickets. He carried a small fishing rod and on his back was a day pack containing water and a small frying pan." When the trio caught enough fish they would grease up a pan and build a fire. Next all the fish were rolled in corn meal and fried along with some potatoes. What a way to spend a day with your son and nephew!

Late in the afternoon the trio came to a long cascading waterfall. The falls were not free falling, but, more of a long chute with potholes placed intermittently through the 100-foot drop.

Actually, the waterfall was in the shape of an s-curve much like a water slide you might see at an amusement park. Bill Fix looked at the two young boys and said, "that blue granite is too slick for my liking, so I am going around this fall to the bottom and fish that big hole."

So, Bill and his nephew disappeared around a point while Patrick sat looking at a pot-hole halfway down the waterfall.

I don't think Patrick has ever met anything he is afraid of and the more he looked at the pot-hole the more he wondered if it contained a record "Speck." So, carefully he crept through the boulders navigating his way down the waterfall to the pothole. At one point he was standing on a flat-topped boulder about 3 feet wide and 30

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Take 5

For this week's article, I wanted to write a Take 5 article highlighting a great Ambassador not only for the Chamber but for our Community; Cathy Wheeler. Cathy is one of the most active members of our community and does a tremendous job as a volunteer for so many organizations. She has not only served as Chair of the Chamber Ambassador Team the past three years, but she has served on numerous committees and on boards. Cathy and her husband John own The Vacuum Store in Blairsville. When I asked Cathy about her role in the business, she shared the vast array of things she handles day to day. She does just about everything except repairs and service calls on central vacuum systems. Cathy currently handles the marketing, paperwork, ordering, running the sales floor and the parts counter, scheduling the service calls, handling social media, and most of the customer interaction.

When asked when she began working at

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Composting

If you have a garden that you spend a lot of time in, you may want to think twice about throwing away coffee grounds or banana peels. Soil amendments and fertilizers can be costly, but you can condition your own organic matter to boost the nutrients in your garden for little to no cost at all by composting. Composting is a great way to recycle used materials that would otherwise be thrown away into a valuable, nutrient rich resource to be added to your vegetable gardens or flower beds.

To compost efficiently, you need to follow four main steps:

1. Maintain good aeration. Composting relies on the activity of tiny organisms called microbes, and in order to do their job effectively, they need air. If there is no air penetrating to the inner portions of your pile, this leads to foul smelling anaerobic activity. This should only be allowed if you have your compost in a closed container. Otherwise, make sure to turn your pile once or twice a month to aerate it. If the pile is not mixed, it can take up to three or four times longer to decompose!

2. Make sure there is enough moisture. If your compost pile becomes too dry, it will take longer to decompose. A dry compost pile can also be a fire hazard. When you make your pile, dampen every layer, but make sure it is not too soggy. If heavy rainfall completely saturates your compost pile, turn it more frequently than you normally would to let it dry out.

3. Add small particles. The bigger the things you add, the longer the microbes will take to break it down. If you add leaves to your pile, go over them with a lawn mower or rent a chipper for your branches and woody plant scraps.

4. Appropriate temperature maintenance. Your compost pile should stay between 110 and 160 degrees Fahrenheit because microbes can break down organic matter much quicker at higher temperatures. This high temperature also kills most pathogens and weed seeds so it does not spread to other plants when you add it to the soil. Despite this, it is best to avoid adding weeds or diseased plants to your pile if possible.

When preparing your compost pile, it is always important to layer your material appropriately. Always make an initial layer with coarser material that cannot be manually broken down into smaller pieces. This helps introduce oxygen into the pile and makes the process more efficient. The next layer should be ten inches deep with organic wastes such as leaves, plant trimmings, and old grass cuttings. Next, add about

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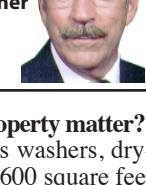
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