

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Farmers Market, FFA thriving

If no one has noticed, agriculture and all things related to farming is alive and well in Union County.

The resurgence began with the construction of the Union County Farmers Market on Old Smokey Road. The venue provides locals with a place to sell locally grown produce and hand-crafted items to patrons.

The Market's popularity soon became a phenomena and space became tight. The community's use of the facility warranted expansion.

No one knows that better than Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris.



"Any time I come out here and see the public enjoying the use of the Farmers Market, it really makes me proud," said Commissioner Paris during Saturday's Blue & Gold Auction. "We've put something out here that serves not only Farmers Market weekend, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but it serves the whole community, whether it be Relay For Life - there are so many organizations that are using this now, and it's just turned out to be a perfect venue for all kinds of things."

The Spring Blue & Gold Auction benefiting Union County Future Farmers of America was a smashing success over the weekend. The semiannual, two-day event took place on Friday, March 11, with a market hogs and small animal sale, then on Saturday, March 12, with a farm equipment sale.

The Union County FFA program will receive about a 10 percent commission on final sales, though costs of putting the auctions on and supplying a free lunch to patrons on Saturday will be accounted for in the final totals.

Blue & Gold acts as a major fundraiser for FFA students, as well as a practical learning experience.

John Clark Pettit, FFA advisor and teacher of agriculture at the high school said a great number of people came together at the Farmers Market - as they always do - to ensure that this student-run non-profit venture was successful.

Pettit thanked parents, members of the FFA Alumni, the community, as well as Farmers Market Manager Mickey Cummings and his staff, and Commissioner Paris, for granting them the use of the Farmers Market for their Blue & Gold events.

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Resurrection Miracle

Easter comes early this year (March 27). The date is based on the Hebrew tradition of using lunar cycles to date the Passover, which coincides with the Passion events. Science helps us date the celebration of Jesus' resurrection, an event that it cannot explain.

The Bible gives a tempting challenge: "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain" (1 Cor. 15:14). Accepting the challenge, skeptics argue that miracles cannot happen because science explains the reality that dead people stay dead. Christians believe a resurrection; therefore Christianity contradicts science. The people of the first century didn't know better, so they were inclined to believe myths. A so-called miracle would be a violation of the laws of nature that we understand now.

This argument misunderstands science and the laws of nature, which only explain and predict natural patterns and regular events. They do not cause anything to happen. The law of gravity didn't know that the Wright brothers defied it. But because we know what normally happens with gravity, the Wright brothers are in the history books. C.S. Lewis' illustration was that if he put \$100 in his hotel room drawer two nights in a row, and the next morning only \$50 was there, the arithmetic laws would tell him that criminal laws were violated. Unless you know the laws of nature you cannot recognize the exception. If you don't know that dead people stay dead, then the resurrection of Jesus is not special.

God sticks his finger in the pool of ordinary events and makes ripples. When we see the ripples, we know He was there. It is not a contradiction to believe that God created a world that operates according to observable laws, and also that God operates outside of those laws. John Lennox said, "If the God who created the system we describe as laws of nature chooses to work outside that system, how can laws of nature forbid it? The universe is not a closed system of cause and effect. It has a Creator."

The Resurrection could not have happened naturally. The Creator who made what we describe with natural laws chose to

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Commissioner's Questions

Q. When is qualifying for county offices over?
A. It is over already and the deadline to qualify was 12:00 noon on Friday, March 11th. I am sure that this issue of the NGN will have an article about who all qualified for what positions.

Q. What does it mean to "qualify"?

A. Recently there were two advertisements in the NGN from the county stating the qualifying fee for the different elected official offices in the courthouse and school board. These ran in the NGN on Jan 19th and Jan 26th. So for a person wanting to run for elected office other than Magistrate Judge and Probate Judge, (who run as non partisan, in the Primary Election on May 24th) in Union County, you must "qualify". In order to qualify, you must pay the qualifying fee as advertised and you must choose a party, either Democrat or Republican and fill out the form and sign it.

Q. When will the Primary Election be held?

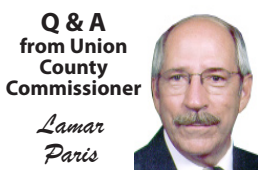
A. It will be held May 24th, but while you can vote for your favorite person then, only candidates in the same party will run against each other in this election. Those like myself that have no primary opponent will face our opponents in the General Election November 11, 2016.

Q. Did someone qualify to run against you this year?

A. Yes someone did and I will have an opponent in November.

Q. Did you first just start helping your community when you were first elected as commissioner?

A. No, I did not just start giving to my community when first elected in 2000, but did it from about the time I got out of college in 1972. My parents, Paul and Edith Paris moved to Union County in the late 1930s from Rome, GA and Paulding Co, and almost immediately began donating time and money to this county to make it a better place to live. My father was the first Kiwanis President and he and D.L. Martin and others helped establish the club. He was active in helping bring one of the first industries to Blairsville, the Joseph Campbell Pepper Plant, and was active in the community until his death in 1960. My mother was the first Historical Society President and was instrumental in saving the historic courthouse.



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Letters to the Editor...

Child Gun Safety

Dear Editor,

Regarding Mr. Mitchell's letter, "An Experiment," the experiment by the TV News & Waterloo (IA) police, should send all mothers who read the letter, scurrying to the NRA to get the NRA's child gun safety program introduced in their communities, if it is not already implemented. The program teaches children what to do when they encounter an unattended firearm: "Stop. Don't touch. Leave the area. Tell an Adult." If all the Iowa kids had been taught

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Historical Society Clarification

Dear Editor,

I would like to clarify two issues regarding the Union County Historical Society's 2016 calendar that have recently been brought to our attention.

The photo on the back page of the calendar depicts Gurley's Store/Wildcat Lodge near Suches. While the caption is correct, giving credit to Donald Oakes for restoring and operating the business, it does not mention Mrs. Eva Frazier, who previously owned the property and played an instrumental role in the initial efforts to restore it.

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Stolen Signs

Dear Editor,

This is to the persons that stole the two signs off my property. Had it been a loaf of bread, an umbrella or a coat, I could have understood your need to ward off hunger, the rain or cold... but a sign?

Please be kind and bring my signs back. I hate to ask for more signs, the candidate did not get them free and "you" taking them will not change my mind as to who to vote for. In fact, it just makes me and my friends know we will be voting for the right person!

Sincerely,

Jean M. Holsapple

God's Love is Free

Dear Editor,

Do you know how rich we are? God's love is rich and it is freely given to each one of us. How we use that love determines how we value it. Do we give it freely away or do we pick and choose who receives it?

Racism is a word many people use but don't understand the true meaning of it. It means judging one another for any reason, i.e.: money, color, education, status, family and looks. Did God not create each one of us in His image? Yes, He did. He commanded us to love one another as I love you. (Matthew 22:38-39). Perfection we will never be, but the love from God is what are given whether we believe, understand or don't

See Wells, page 5A

Teacher Raises

Dear Editor,

The proposed Georgia State Budget is going to contain a 3% raise for teachers. Last year's budget had money for teacher raises, but yours were left out. Not sure as to why, but it is time for the parents of students to stand up to the Administration and School Board and do what is right and long overdue. Our teachers and all the others who work for our system have sacrificed long enough.

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Designated Pet Area

Dear Editor,

Residents of Union County, both pet owners and those who do not own pets, are fortunate to have our beautiful Meeks Park for outdoor activities, made possible by tax payers who own pets as well as those who do not own pets. Walkers, joggers and runners can enjoy the trails

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"With your educational training, I'm sure you're qualified. But we don't have any openings for experts in taking tests."



Life Saver

It is small; it hangs from the ceiling or wall; and you never give it a second glance but it can save your life. What is it? It's a smoke alarm. Working smoke alarms save lives. Daylight Savings Time is the time of year when the department encourages everyone to test smoke alarms, replace batteries, and to update an escape plan. Each home needs smoke alarms and they should be checked to make sure that they are working. Working smoke alarms increases your chance of escaping a home fire by 50%.

A myth about a home fire is that the fire is what kills the occupants. That is possible but the main killer in most home fires is the smoke. Smoke can fill a room in seconds and reduces the amount of clean, breathable air. The smoke contains harmful substances like carbon monoxide and hydrogen cyanide. These harmful substances, along with heated gases, irritate the lungs and prevent the body from using what little oxygen is breathed in. The person's body starts to shut down, they pass out; and become a victim of smoke inhalation. Properly working smoke alarms can warn the occupants at the first signs of smoke and give them a chance to get out of the building before they breath in too much of the harmful smoke.

Another issue is the materials found in a home today. Most are made of plastic. Plastic burns very quickly and as it burns, it produces heavy, dark smoke which starts at the ceiling and collects down to the floor. This smoke is not only harmful but can severely reduce visibility. It can block out the lights and make escape difficult. A person can get disoriented in their own home from the layers of heavy, dark smoke. If anyone has tried to find a flash light at night when the power is out, they know how this feels. I still bump into things. Once again, early warning is the key to getting out before the smoke builds up. Having working smoke alarms can alert occupants before this smoke gets too thick or to the floor.

Union County Fire Department is committed to life safety. We offer free smoke alarms to residents of Union County. A person can request the department to come to their home and install the smoke alarms. In addition to smoke alarm installation, firefighters can check any existing smoke alarms and provide homeowners with home fire safety information to include: escape plans, smoke alarm testing, smoke alarm maintenance, and Firewise. If you wish to request smoke alarms for your home, complete the request on our web page at www.unioncountygva.gov, Departments, Fire Department/EMA, and select the Smoke Alarm Request link.

Union County Fire Department - Our Family Protecting Your Family



Rough as a Cob

For many years I have heard the term "rough as a cob" and knew the meaning in my mind. However, to be sure of this meaning you must experience the cob first hand. My father's two cousins from Chicago came for a visit in 1952. Harold and Johnny were good boys. But, they were naive and gullible. For example, they were fearful of using an outhouse and the boys could not understand why their southern cousins did not have indoor plumbing. Dad and his brother Bud seized upon the opportunity.

Harold and Johnny enjoyed eating and Granny enjoyed cooking. The boys had eaten big meals for 3 consecutive days, but, the two young men refused to go to the outhouse. But, the third night of their visit Granny prepared a meal of fried pork chops, collard greens, pinto beans and cornbread. Dad and his brother Bud knew what was coming and removed all the paper from the outhouse which was exchanged with red and white corn cobs. Dad and his brother had explained to their cousins that poor country folks always used the cobs since they couldn't afford paper. And the brothers explained the use and timing of the cobs.

Early the fourth morning the boys went to the barn for early chores before breakfast. As Johnny bent over to retrieve eggs in the hen house a look of concern appeared on his face. At the same time Harold had just begun milking the cow. Both boys took off running at the same time. Harold beat Johnny to the outhouse, so, he paced outside while Harold did his business. Dad and Bud crept over to the corn crib which was close enough to the outhouse to allow them to listen to their cousins.

Later Harold told his mother he had used the red cob first and then used the white cob. All Dad remembers is the fact that there was lots of groaning and hollering coming from the outhouse. Harold told his Mom, "those cobs sure were rough". When Harold came from out of the outhouse he told his younger brother that he should avoid the outhouse at all costs. Johnny made it halfway back to the henhouse before he turned and ran to the outhouse. Once again lots of groaning and even a little swearing came from the inside of the old building. Upon exiting the outhouse Johnny said, "Is there anything rougher than a cob?"

My first 4-H Meeting as a County Agent in Union County was in April of 1990. Back in those days we required younger 4-H Members to interview a senior citizen and then give a report on that interview. So, during the April Club Meeting of Shelia Collins 5th Graders a young girl raises her hand to give her report. She came to the front of the room with a grocery bag and told the class about her 90 year old great aunt.

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Blairsville's Blue Ridge Candy Company a finalist

Judges have selected Blue Ridge Candy Company's Dark and Milk Chocolate Caramels with Sea Salt to compete in the final round of UGA's 2016 Flavor of Georgia Food Product Contest. Representatives of the Blairsville confectionary will travel to the Georgia Railroad Freight Depot in Atlanta March 14-15 to compete alongside



32 other products in the final round of judging. This year marks the 10th annual Flavor of Georgia contest. Over the last decade, the contest has grown in scope and prestige but remains the state's premier testing ground for both small, upstart food companies and time-tested products.

The finalists, who have passed the first round of judging, were selected from a field of more than 135 products in 11 categories - the largest field in the contest's history. Finalists will bring their products to the final round of judging as part of Gov. Nathan Deal's Ag Day at the Capitol.

"Each year it becomes more difficult to select finalists because each year the field of products submitted to the Flavor of Georgia contest is better, more diverse and more innovative than the year before," said Sharon P. Kane, contest coordinator and an economist with the UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. A food business development specialist, Kane and her colleagues have organized the annual contest since 2007.

Judges for the final round of the contest will include food brokers, grocery buyers,

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Grass Tetany

It seems spring has indeed sprung! This bout of warm weather we're having is quite the improvement to the cold wet winter we had this past year. Grass is finally going to start greening up, and if you own cattle, it's an important time to prepare for grass tetany. Also known as the "grass staggers," this disease occurs when there is an imbalance of minerals, specifically magnesium, in the blood of the cow. Older, early lactating cows are the most susceptible to this disease.

While grass tetany can occur in the fall and winter, it's most commonly seen in spring as wet, cool weather is followed by warmer temperatures. Cases of grass tetany are usually seen when cows graze on ryegrass, tall fescue, bluegrass, and small grain, and most severe cases are caused by lush, rapidly growing grasses. However, the risk of your cows becoming sick from this disease greatly decreases if they can forage in a pasture that is 30% legumes such as clover and alfalfa. Your cows are at greatest risk of acquiring grass tetany if your pasture soil is low in magnesium but high in potassium and nitrogen. A basic soil test can help you determine these levels in your pastures. Should your soil results show low magnesium and low pH, you can correct this by adding dolomitic limestone which will raise mineral levels and the pH.

Cows with mild cases stop producing milk and appear nervous. Those with acute grass tetany stop grazing, are unusually alert (heads and ears are up constantly), stagger, or repeatedly lie down and stand up again. Cows in this stage are easily startled and upset and collapse shortly after. Once a cow collapses, immediate treatment is needed to prevent convulsions and death.

To prevent grass tetany in your herd, feed your cows either a high magnesium supplement or a free choice mineral that is 8-12% magnesium. During lactation, cows need at least 15 grams a

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North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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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. Advertising and subscriptions can be paid by cash, check or credit card.

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