

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Community running on all 8 cylinders

Pause, take a deep breath, exhale - Union County is open for business.

From the Mountain Home Show, Friday and Saturday at North Georgia Technical College's Blairsville Campus (See the pullout in this week's edition), to the Buy Local Extravaganza on April 30 at the Union County Community Center, the fun is just getting started.

Believe it or not, we've already had our prom night in Union County. And, the spring and summer fun is just getting started. Graduation is just around the corner.

It's hard to believe that April is almost history. Seems like just yesterday that we started a new year.

It won't be long before the Union County Farmers Market will host Ramp Day. Market Manager Mickey Cummings says there will be trout and deep fried ramps, hushpuppies with ramps and fried potatoes with ramps on that day. It is Mother's Day weekend so many of the Market vendors will be there as well. So, come out and enjoy Ramp Day on May 9th.

As a matter of fact, it won't be long before we're at the Farmers Market every weekend. I'm told that June 6 is the day the Market opens for its summer campaign.

Also just around the corner, the National Day of Prayer, and the proclamation signing is Thursday at the Courthouse.

I've told just about anyone who will listen just how busy our community is almost year-round. It's truly one of the more dynamic communities in North Georgia.

There's always something happening, and always something to do, during the week or the weekend.

Truth be told, Union County is home to several events that attract thousands of people to our beautiful community.

The Annual Scottish Festival, the Butternut Creek Festival, and the Annual Sorghum Festival attract 10s of thousands of tourists to our community.

And, Vogel State Park is the gem of our state's parks system. It attracts more than 400,000 people each year and is the busiest, most profitable state park in Georgia.

Yes indeed, Union County has much to offer, and that makes time fly, because we're having fun.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



God's Not Dead

If you haven't seen the movie God's Not Dead (2014), here's my version of a review, more a summary of the key dialogue.

The plot develops around college student Josh Wheaton who accepts a challenge from his philosophy professor to prove the existence of God. His arguments are from cosmology, evolution, evil, and morality.

Wheaton begins with the Big Bang and this from Nobel-winning scientist Steven Weinberg: "In three minutes, 98 percent of the matter that is or will be was produced." Yet for 2500 years most scientists agreed with Aristotle that the universe always existed. Belgian astronomer Lemaitre said that the entire universe jumping into existence in a trillionth of a second out of nothingness and in an intense flash of light is how he would expect the universe to respond if God were to actually utter the command, "Let there be light." So for 2500 years the Bible had it right and science had it wrong.

A fellow student quoted Richard Dawkins, "If you tell me God created the universe, I have the right to ask, who created God?" Wheaton countered, "If the universe created you, then who created the universe?" His point is that both theist and atheist have to answer the question of first cause. If you do not allow for God, a credible alternative is hard to find. The professor replied with a Stephen Hawkin quote, "Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. It is not necessary to invoke God to set the universe in motion." Wheaton again countered that John Lennox, professor of mathematics and philosophy at Oxford, had noted three errors of circular logic in Hawkin's statement.

Turning to evolution, Wheaton pointed to Darwin, who after theorizing that species evolved over long periods of time, famously concluded that "nature does not jump." Yet if the 3.8 billion years of life (according to evolution) were a 24 hour period, in 90 seconds most major animal groups suddenly appear in their current form. Not only did nature jump, but it made a giant leap, supporting the Biblical account of creation.

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Questions and Answers

Q. Are there any rules and/or regulations for hauling trash in my pick-up truck?

A. Any trash hauled in any type of vehicle exposed to the outside, by law, must be covered. While pickup truck and trailer owners may not intentionally litter our highways, it is estimated that over 70% of trash on our highways is blown out of these vehicles, with the remaining being intentionally thrown out of vehicle windows. It is a misdemeanor to allow trash and debris to blow out of the bed of a truck and litter our beautiful mountain roads. However, it does not matter which you are guilty of, either is making our county look bad and costing you tens of thousands of dollars each year in picking up roadside trash.

Q. If my neighbor has a tree that falls on my property, is it my responsibility to have it cleaned up?

A. Maybe. Rural areas like Union County have many trees that periodically fall and become a problem. Without the use of common sense, and unless on county road right of way, unfortunately, it can be a civil issue.

Q. Does the county have an ordinance regarding falling trees or other debris?

A. No. The county does not have an ordinance stating whose responsibility this is. Based on Georgia's trespass law, the Court System follows the precedent that if the tree is dead or diseased and you notify your neighbor in writing before it falls onto your property, there is a good possibility the responsibility for clean-up will be the neighbors. If it falls during a wind storm or some other act of God, then the responsibility falls on you. If there is ultimately a disagreement, the decision would have to be presented in court and a judge would decide. However, we would hope that most people can work this out among neighbors without the need for a lawsuit. A good guide on this issue would be to treat your neighbor like you would want to be treated if the shoe were on the other foot.

Q. I have some neighbors who are always shooting guns on their property. If I feel that this is unsafe, who do I contact?

A. If you feel that shooting is going on in your neighbor-

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor ...

Thank You

Dear Editor,

We appreciate your generosity and support of the Hope House and our Super Chef Showdown. Thank you for support of our community.

Thank you,
Hope House Board of Directors

Thank a teacher

Dear Editor,

This is the time of year when stress and anxiety envelops our children and grandchildren as well as the teachers in whom we entrust those children's learning. As a retired teacher, I understand all too well the burden of the standardized testing that has become the 'holy grail' of education. My daughter sent me a post from my granddaughter's teacher during testing week. I wanted to share this as an encouragement to teachers and parents during this time. Always remember, our children are much more than one test's results.

"I truly believe I was called to do the job I do. I gratefully accept the role I have and the daily work I'm doing. It's not an easy job, but it's definitely something I'm passionate about. I love my kids. I soar with them, and I sink with them; we bear the burdens and the triumphs together. After today, I will choose to walk in the manner worthy of the calling! These words alone jumped out at me, and then I read them in Ephesians. Wow! My job, my role is much more than any test, any curriculum, any standards say. Our job, as educators, is to teach determination, perseverance, fellowship, love, humility, passion... within the reading, writing, math, science, and social studies of course... but, walk worthy! Be passionate about your life; persevere in times of trial; be determined to succeed (even if the odds aren't in your favor); do unto others as you would have them do unto you; be humble and do selfless acts of kindness; and give above and beyond in all that you do. I hope that each year I grow more and more as an educator. But, if nothing else... I hope always to remember to walk in a manner worthy of the calling! They are the future, and they are worth it. But, one test doesn't make them or break them!"

I thank God for this teacher. There are many more with just as much passion and conviction who are called to educate our children. Thank a teacher today.

Respectfully,
Karen McGuire, Retired Educator

John 14:6

Dear Editor,

As most folks know there are many religions in the world and choosing one is indeed a tough task to make. Here's my personal view on religion. Religion doesn't save you, it can't change you, it won't heal you or even set you free, but a personal relationship with Jesus Christ does all of the above for you, if you are willing to just believe on the name of Christ.

A lot of folks may say: That's all I have to do, is just believe in Jesus Christ and I can get saved and go to heaven someday. A resounding yes to your question, if you believe with all of your heart. The problem with some folks is they try to make it look so hard and complicated and they try their best as they search for a religion to cling too. The Bible which is the inspired word of God tells us in the book of John 14:6 where Jesus is speaking: "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father above, except through Me." Wow another simple wording of how to believe and go to Heaven. If you don't believe a word I have said that is your choice to make, but this one thing I hope you consider. What if I am right about a personal relationship with Christ and you are wrong.

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May Garden Chores

Strong sun and wind are hard on new transplants. Set them out in the late afternoon so the plants have overnight to acclimate.

Tomatoes can be grown in containers on a sunny deck or patio. Bush-type tomatoes do better in containers; plant in a large pot at least 24 inches across filled with a good quality planting soil. Fertilize and water tomatoes regularly. Plant rosemary, basil, thyme and other herbs to enhance summer meals. Herbs are a good choice for a flower-box for your patio. Most herbs grow best in full sun, but mint, cilantro, parsley and thyme tolerate moderate shade.

Plant peppers by the first part of June for summer harvest. Plant annual vines like moon flower vine and purple hyacinth bean to disguise ugly walls and enliven fences. Plant sunflowers for a sunny summer flower arrangement.

Use rubber soaker hoses among shrubs and flowers in beds and mulch with pine straw to put the water where the plants need it and to conserve water this summer. Water roses with a soaker hose to keep water off the foliage and possibly prevent blackspot. Weed flowerbeds and borders. Pinch out terminal growth (the tip) of annuals to make bushy plants and encourage growth. Prune climbing roses after they finish flowering.

Mulch newly planted blueberry plants to insulate shallow roots from heat and drought. Move or replant irises if they did not bloom very well last season. Fertilize your vegetable garden every four to six weeks during the summer, always following label directions. Variegated hosta may turn green when grown in lots of sun. It's best to grow hosta where it does not get hot afternoon sun.

Look for Lenten rose seedlings underneath your mature plants and transplant them to other shady spots in your garden. Do not pile mulch against the trunks of trees. This can encourage possible insect and water problems. Mulch should be approximately 6 to 8 inches away on all sides. Do not remove daffodil foliage after they have bloomed until it turns yellow. The leaves absorb sunshine for energy and nutrition for the bulbs so they can bloom again next year.

Caladiums need generous amounts of water and fertilizer to continually produce new leaves during the summer. Look for fire ant mounds and treat with appropriate insecticides, always following label directions. Lichens growing on your tree trunk may be an indication that your tree is stressed from soil compaction, poor drainage or insufficient fertilizer. Remove invasive plants like Chinese privet, poison ivy and English ivy from your landscape.

Prune off sprouts from the base of crape myrtles that are being trained to an upright tree form.

Seeds of annual flowers like zinnias, cosmos, salvia, marigolds, and nasturtiums can be seeded directly into prepared flowerbeds. Wait

See Allen, page 5A

Jo Anne Allen

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer



The Cotton Gin

The old cotton gins of Phil Campbell, AL are long gone, but, one of them influenced the lives of at least four generations of my family. One of the gins sat next to the railroad tracks of our hometown in Northwest Alabama. A team of mules pulling a wagon laden with cotton could make the trip from Trapptown to Phil Campbell in three and one half to four hours. It's a seven mile trip to town and now it only takes 10-12 minutes, but,

in the days of my great grandfather mules and horses were the modes of transportation. Papa was nearly seven years old when he made his first trip to the gin. He rode on the wagon seat with his father to the gin. Papa said they left the house at about 1 a.m. His father wanted to get in line early because the gin opened at 6 a.m. By the time they came to the gin at 4:45 a.m. there was a line of about four to five wagons waiting by the railroad tracks next to the cotton gin. Just before 6 there were 15 wagons behind Papa and his father, Lon. At 6 the gin opened and the train from Birmingham to Memphis made its stop in Phil Campbell.

Papa was new to the ways of towns and he'd never seen a train. He said, "The strange hissing sound and the black smoke coming from the front of this thing made me nervous. The big light on the front of the train reminded me of some kind of strange critter. So, I told Papa that this thing was some kind of one-eyed monster". Lon Cummings grabbed the reigns of the mules and told his son to get down from the wagon. After Papa stepped down and walked to the side of his father he said, "That one-eyed monster let out a shrill whistle and it started to move. Our mules and every other mule at the gin began to prance around". Lon held tight to the mules and his little boy until the thing had traveled down the tracks and then he explained to his son that the monster was actually a train and it carried people and supplies from Birmingham to Memphis.

As Papa made the transition from boyhood to manhood he realized he needed to make money to help him purchase land for a farm. So, Papa and some of his friends, including Skeeter Trapp and Russell Hutcheson, all got themselves a job at the gin. These 3 worked with a crew which included a fellow by the name of "Prince Albert Column". The young men worked long and difficult hours and made \$1 a day. Sometimes they would go without being paid for weeks at a time and their boss was a hard man who used profanity often. Prince Albert was goosey meaning that when you poked him in the ribs he would punch whatever was directly in front of him and the man was big and strong.

One day Prince Albert made a mistake while in the gin and his boss man was railing away using the foulest language that Papa had

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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