

Opinions

Everybody has one...

National Day of Prayer

This week, I lend my column to Richard and Sharon Morrison, National Day of Prayer, event planners for Union County. Union County will mark the 64th Anniversary of the National Day of Prayer. This year's event will be held in the main sanctuary of First Baptist Church in Downtown Blairsville. It will be held on Thursday, May 7 at 6:30 p.m.

The theme for this year is *Lord Hear our Cry*, based on the scripture verse I Kings 8:28 - *Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in Your presence this day.*

This theme emphasizes the need for individuals, corporately and individually, to place their faith in the unfailing character of their Creator, who is sovereign over all governments, authorities, and men.

This year's Prayer Testimony will be presented by Missionary Jim Arnold. Adam McPherson will lead us in worship with a special solo.

The National Day of Prayer is a day set aside by Congress and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 as the first Thursday in May each year.

It's a day dedicated for people to turn to God in prayer and meditation.

Everyone is invited to this event, and celebration. Area pastors will be praying for our Nation, state and local officials. Also, prayers will be offered for our Armed Forces, law enforcement, our fire department, as well as our medical and emergency responders. Prayers will be offered also for families, our youth, world missions, Israel, and the Body of Christ.

Please join us in this united effort and unique opportunity for citizens, and their elected leaders in our community to join together in prayer, and acknowledge together the sovereignty of Almighty God, and to seek His guidance and blessings for our Nation, as we depend on Him.

A short and sweet message and invitation has been extended to everyone in our community. Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley signed the proclamation last week declaring May 7 as Day of Prayer in Union County.

At this crucial time for our nation, we can do nothing more

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Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



National Day of Prayer

The National Day of Prayer (NDP) observance is next week. Americans have much to pray about these days, but as a nationally sanctioned event the NDP almost ended a few years ago. Ironically, the secular worldview that would end the event is one of the reasons we shouldn't.

Secularism holds that there is no place for faith in the public arena of ideas or in any government activity. It attempts to use the doctrine of 'separation of church and state' as a gag on the free exercise of religion guaranteed in the First Amendment. In 2011, the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals ended a lawsuit against the NDP, ruling that the President is free to make appeals to the public based on many kinds of grounds, including political and religious. Since the government is not compelling citizens to participate, the NDP is no violation of the First Amendment which prohibits 'establishment of religion.'

Secularism is a worldview that is now more favored by the courts than the theism worldview. It seems that the more success secularists have in removing God from schools, politics, government, the military, business, and culture in general, the more immoral and weak our nation becomes, hence our need for prayer. Our second President, John Adams wrote, "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion... Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

Perhaps that's why our nation's leaders dating back to the Continental Congress have called for days of prayer especially in times of crisis. At D-Day, President Roosevelt didn't call just for a day, "but because the road is long and the desire is great, I ask that our people devote themselves in a continuance of prayer." In 1952, at the urging of Billy Graham the Congress passed a law signed by Harry Truman establishing a NDP on an annual basis. About it, Ronald Reagan said, "From General Washington's struggle at Valley Forge to the present, this Nation has fervently sought and received divine guidance." In 1988, federal law set the NDP as the first Thursday of May.

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Questions and Answers

Q. My neighbors have three junk cars in their yard. Can the county make them clean it up?

A. For your neighbor to be subject to the junkyard ordinance, there would have to be five or more junk vehicles on their property, and as long as the vehicles are tagged and titled they are not considered junk. If you live in a subdivision you might want to check the deeds and see if there are any restrictions that would make the neighbors clean up their junk. Old junk yards are grandfathered in but new ones are not allowed to be started. It is actually much less of a problem today than several years ago since the price of steel has been so high and it has made it worth while to scrap many of them.

Q. Can I get a temporary alcohol license for a public event I am hosting?

A. Yes, there are two types of temporary event licenses: one for non-profit organizations and one for other special events and festivals. Applications for both types of temporary licenses require an application to be submitted to the Alcohol Board for approval, which can be picked up at the Commissioner's Office. A fee must be paid and approval from the Sheriff's Office on crowd control and parking must be obtained. All special events must comply with the times and days allowed for selling alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises. If applying on behalf of a non-profit organization, proof of non-profit status is required and also the organization has to have been established for longer than one year. There are many other regulations related to the temporary special event permit, which may be viewed on-line at www.union-countyga.gov or you may come by the Commissioner's office for a copy of the ordinance.

Q. When will the new 4-H shotgun shooting range be open?

A. When involving government grant funds, there are often delays with a project. Such is the case now. The process has continued but it will probably be next year or later in this year before any earth movement will happen. A second public hearing will need to be held. I announced at the county meeting that we would hold it on Monday, May 4, at 5:15p.m., but we have some rede-

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Letters to the Editor ...

God's Creation in Need of Support

Dear Editor,

God's creation is all too often ignored or even treated with outright scorn by His very own followers. Somehow many if not most Christians have gotten it into their heads that God created this world for us to abuse and when they are asked to do something to help save the natural world, they often scoff and refuse to do anything. The thing that's interesting is many of these same people wonder why our world today is becoming what some call a post-Christian world with a culture all too often neglecting God. But the thing is God has been calling us to Him through the wonder and splendor of the creation for centuries. Now, as the natural world, gift to us that it is, becomes more and more damaged and destroyed it has less and less opportunity to demonstrate God's Providence to the world-and the world suffers for it.

Will Lance



Farm Animals

My occupation as a County Agent for 33 years has been full of wonderful memories and many of those memories involve farm animals. Even before I became a County Agent animals around my Grandfather's farm captured my interest. As a young boy I jumped onto the back of a friend's pony. The night preceding this incident I watched a movie in which a cowboy was nearly dragged to death because he failed to adequately jump on to the back of his waiting horse. So, when I decided to jump I cleared the horse and landed clear on the other side of the animal and broke my arm.

Years later I went coon hunting with my Uncle. Instead of walking we rode mules and while crossing a creek the mule I was riding fell into the water with me on its back. The mule's foot became entangled in the belly strap and it nearly drowned before we could cut the belly strap and get the mule out of the creek. A few years later I graduated UGA and

went to work for Cooperative Extension. My first job was located in Washington, GA and one of the first individuals to call me was Mr. Grady. He wanted my opinion on what type of bull he should choose. His herd consisted of a bunch of Herford crossed females. We talked about an hour and I encouraged him to purchase a bull with no Hereford genetics. Mr. Grady purchased a rather nice looking Santa Gertudis bull from a breeder just down the road.

Later he needed help in working his herd of cattle. So, I went to his home and we moved the cattle into a working corral. The cattle were pushed through a chute and their individual heads were caught in a head chute which was attached to two fence posts set into the ground. While the cattle were held there we vaccinated and dewormed all the females. Finally, we pushed the big old red "Gert" bull into the head chute and as I pushed the syringe full of vaccine into the bull he raised up his head picking up the head chute and walked out of the corral. The bull didn't panic. He just walked away with the head chute still attached to his neck.

A few years later found me as a County Agent working in Trenton, GA. Once again I was called upon to help Mr. Clarence work his cattle. We worked more than 100 females and their calves on this day. Mr. Clarence had five other people helping us. We gave shots, dewormed and also castrated all the males. One of the people helping us that day was a 13-year-old boy who wanted to become a farmer. He was enthralled by what was happening. He was particularly interested in the process of castration. He asked me about where I had learned to castrate these bulls. I told him I was a brain surgeon and that I had learned the process in medical school. The young man looked puzzled and so I said, "You see all these little male calves? Well, after I am finished with them their attitudes will change. They will no longer be aggressive and want to fight with the other little bulls." The very next week I was in the grocery store with my wife and I noticed this young man walking with his mother. As we approached one another the young man said, "Look Mom there is that brain surgeon I was telling you about."

A few years later I was helping a young 4-H member with his show lamb. During July our 4-H members would purchase lambs and begin the process of training and feeding them for the state show to be held in the fall. We would order and attach the show tags to the ears of the lambs in summer. The tags were attached by a special pair of pliers which contained a piercing instrument similar to what is used to pierce a girl's ear for the adornment of earrings. So, I went to the boy's house one hot summer day and was by myself so I stood with the lambs head held between my knees and squeezed the pliers inserting the tag into the ear of the lamb. I know this hurts because the lamb's head jerked upward into my groin. At first I saw blackness and then stars. I became woozy and nearly passed out due to the intense pain. I leaned against the

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Thank you

Dear Editor,

The Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter of the Sons of American Revolution thank you for your excellent coverage of our Patriots Day recognition at the Union County Historical building last Saturday. The goals of the SAR include Patriotism, education, and history of the Revolutionary War. Your articles helped us toward those goals. Our SAR chapter has won numerous awards and the NGN paper has helped us significantly achieve those awards.

We especially thank young staff writer Mason Mitcham for his attendance and article as well as Lowell Nicholson, staff photographer. Cissy Alexander has continuously helped us over the years with articles informing the public of our activities and it is great working with her.

Just wanted to thank you for your publicity of our Sons of American Revolution activities.

David R. Cook
President, Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter

National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day

March and April are our Spring wildfire months here in North Georgia. Most of my articles are about wildfire preparedness in our communities and are intended to make you aware of the wildfire risks all around us and the small things that you can do to prevent one of these life changing events in your backyard. When conditions are right, it only takes one match or a small spark to start an out-of-control fire that can't be stopped before it destroys things that can't be replaced! I know that it is hard to start a fire when it is wet like it has been lately, but conditions can change quickly and can become dangerous overnight.

Even though we have not had a major wildfire since 2008 or 2009 in our area, and no loss of life or homes, history is not on our side and sooner or later a wildfire will strike and it won't be pretty. Imagine what this area would look like with all of these scenic mountains charred and the views turned black. Who would want to visit or live here after that? Our wildfire education program is working because it was reported recently that a couple of our nearby north Georgia counties have had 57 and 33 wildfires this year and Towns has had only seven and the trend is holding true this year also!

Might be luck, but we'll let our Firewise programs take the credit for educating you as to the dangers all around us and you have taken measures to lessen your risks. The wildfire that we can have one day might not be as spectacular as the destructive fires out west, but if it is just your house or my house it is a tragedy just the

RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



same. The most dangerous months for wildfires here in the mountains are November, March, and April, but we can't let our guard down the rest of the year because wildfires don't know which month it is and can happen at any time when the conditions are right.

Wildfire education is a never ending, year round process. Join communities throughout the U.S. on Saturday, May 2, 2015 as the National Fire Protection Association launches its second national Wildfire Community Preparedness Day! Commit a couple of hours, or the entire day, and watch as your actions positively contribute to reducing your community's wildfire risk. Challenge your friends, your family, relatives, or youth organization to develop a project and join others throughout the nation in making big changes for community safety. Your efforts will help raise wildfire awareness, promote collaboration and bring neighbors together to work on projects that can help protect homes, neighborhoods and entire communities from future wildfire risk or current post-fire impacts.

On May 2, in Towns County our Fire Rescue Department along with the US Forest Service, Georgia Forestry Commission, Towns County Citizen's Coalition, Towns County EMS, Towns County Sheriff's Department, Red Cross, and Chest/Chatt RC&D will have a live, full scale wildfire/evacuation exercise in Lake Forest Subdivision on Ramey Mountain. These emergency agencies are the ones that stand between you and the dangers all around us every day and they will be training under real conditions (no fire though) for what could happen in your neighborhood one day. The exercise will be directed and monitored by professional coaches and monitors who have experience in real life wildfire events and will help guide and coach our first responders through the disaster exercise. The exercise will train and

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Business of the Quarter Service Plumbing & Septic

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce that Service Plumbing & Septic has been chosen as our Business of the Quarter for the second quarter of 2015. The Business of the Quarter program was established to recognize outstanding businesses and organizations that go above and beyond to serve the local community.

Owner John Chitwood is a well respected business owner in Union County who works diligently to satisfy customer needs. He is very involved in our local Chamber and has participated in a variety of Chamber events including our Business After Hours and Holly Jolly Christmas. The company has also given many donations of time and service to local organizations such as SAFE, Hayesville Women's Shelter, Habitat for Humanity, The Humane Society Mountain Shelter, and several local churches.

In 2014, Mr. Chitwood graduated from the Blairsville-Union County Chamber's Leadership Union program. Through this experience, he joined with several local business owners and community leaders to begin work on what has become known as the "We Are Still Here Memorial" project. This massive undertaking will commemorate the celebrated return of four Native American Chiefs with the unveiling of a 10 foot tall bronze statue at Meeks Park in September.

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They Stink Worse Than Fish

I have people in my life who literally turn green when they smell seafood. Often I'm asked by those chickens of the sea, "How can you eat something that smells so badly?" My usual retort is, "It doesn't smell awful to someone who loves seafood."

These next few weeks, one of the most delightful culinary floras emerges from under the leafy cover in certain areas of the Chattahoochee Forest. Sometimes referred to as a wild leek, a wood leek or even wild garlic, we here at the Farmers Market refer to them as ramps.

I can hear most of you now. "Oh, they stink". No, not to those of us who adore ramps. For those of you who don't appreciate the pungent aroma of the ramp and its onion-garlic like flavor, I'd like to tell you to "go take a hike". Literally. Take a hike in the woods in order to discover the Allium tricoccum, first introduced to Britain in 1770 and to the Appalachians in the 19th century. Would you know a ramp patch if you tripped over it? You won't find them around pine trees, Farmers Market family member Roger Gerber assures me. "They like shade and being covered up with leaves, but they don't like pine, for some reason". Ramps favor sandy, moist soils and are often found near streams, though you might also find them carpeting the forest floor where poplar and maple trees are found.

Eve Fox writes in her blog The Garden of Eating, "Ramps are such beautiful plants. I think they look just like a cross between a Lily of the Valley and an onion. Strong but slender with green leaves and a beautiful purple stem, they have a "seam" that runs partway up the leaves." If you see such a plant and you are still not sure, pull a leaf and tear it. Take a sniff. Debating if it is an onion or garlic? You most likely have found a ramp.

I'm fully aware that most of you reading this today, armored with a clothespin on your nose, are probably not going to put on your hiking boots in search of this green leafed perennial. We at the Union County Farmers Market are offering you an opportunity to partake in a multitude of these recipes the Saturday of May

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



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Kenneth West
Owner/Publisher

Charles Duncan
Editor

Lowell Nicholson
Photographer

Website: www.nganews.com

E-mail: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com

Mailing: POBox 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514



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Phone: (706) 745-6343 Fax: (706) 745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514