

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Time to Think About Smoke Alarms

Winter is here and we have turned on the heat. Heating the home is the second leading cause of a home fire. There are many ways to prevent these types of fires such as regular inspections and maintenance of fireplaces and HVAC units as well as practicing fire safety. Although we do all we can to be safe, home fires still happen.

The most important thing during a home fire is to escape. This is a matter of time. Fires can start quickly and build even faster. This is usually due to the materials found in a home today. Most are made of plastic and burn very quickly, producing heavy, dark smoke which starts at the ceiling and collects down to the floor, reducing visibility. The smoke 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. That is why it is so important to have smoke alarms in the home to alert occupants at the first sign of smoke giving them more time to escape.

A myth about a home fire is that the fire is what kills the occupants. That is possible but the main killer is the smoke. Smoke reduces the amount of clean, breathable air and can fill a room in seconds. 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 left in the air. 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 sooner and give them a chance to get out of the building before they breathe in too much of the harmful smoke.

We encourage everyone to install smoke alarms throughout the home. If you have smoke alarms, it is important to ensure that they are working; that they are tested; and that you and your family know what to do when they alarm.

Union County Fire Department offers free smoke alarms to residents of Union County. A person can request the department to come to their home and install the smoke alarms. If you wish to request smoke alarms for your home, complete the request on our web page at www.unioncountygga.gov/fire-department/ and select

See Dyer, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Exult in Hope

Everybody has trials and tribulations. It's a fact of life. The question is, can you make sense of those experiences?

The human tendency is to flee adversity and feel overwhelmed when it catches you. Reminds me of the Dickens character Pickwick who travels by horse-drawn cab. He asks the cabbie, "How is it possible that such an average and miserable horse can drive such a big and heavy cab?" The cabbie replies, "It's a question of the wheels." "What do you mean?" Pickwick asks. "The wheels are so well oiled," the cabbie says, "that it is enough for the horse to stir a little for the wheels to begin to turn, and then the poor horse must run for its life!"

You can try to run ahead of adversity, but soon enough it catches up. The Bible offers believers a way to extract value and meaning from adversity. "We exult in hope of the glory of God... We also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance, proven character, and hope. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts" (Rom. 5:2-5). So, to work that sequence backwards, because adversity does not change God's love for you, you have hope. Grasping hope builds character, and that's how you persevere. Instead of fleeing tribulations, you exult in them and embrace them as opportunities to grow. That is how you have a resilient, faithful life.

Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." With some self-reflection, you can prepare yourself to have resilience when you need it. Do you have perfectionistic tendencies? If so, adversity can make you feel like a total failure. Do you tend to expand a negative experience into a pattern of defeat or a dark cloud over your entire life? Do your negative feelings control your view of reality? Do you hammer yourself with guilt, even after you've done everything you can to work the problem?

Bring these reflections into the light of God's truth! Embrace tribulations as opportunities to persevere in faith. The worst thing that could happen is for God to stop loving you or separate Himself from you. As a believer, you know that will not happen. So, if the worst will not happen, you can focus on hope

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Our office has received various questions about public water in Union County and about Lake Nottely. Though I have spoken on this topic in the past, I was asked to address certain concerns for the sake of new residents.

Q. Does Union County Government operate a public water system?

A. No. Coosa Water Authority and Notla Water Authority are independent legislatively enacted entities that are not controlled by Union County or the City of Blairsville. They are governed by their board of directors who are voted into office by the water users in their area. To clarify, Union County Government does not operate a public water system.

Q. How are the Water Authority service boundaries separated?

A. Coosa Water Authority mostly covers West of Blairsville along the Blue Ridge Highway and parts of Owtown. They have approximately 1,811 water customers. Notla Water Authority mostly covers the Northeastern part of Union County and they have approximately 6,662 water customers. The City of Blairsville provides water to the city and their services extend slightly out of town in all directions and including the Airport Industrial Park and Walmart. They have approximately 2,200 customers. Many of those are commercial accounts.

Q. Why don't you leave Lake Nottely at full pool throughout the entire year?

A. Wouldn't it be great if we could control the lake levels? This is a sore spot with some lake homeowners as well as those who enjoy lake recreation. However, Lake Nottely is owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), and the county has absolutely no authority when it comes to determining the water levels. Lake Nottely water levels are strictly controlled by TVA. The TVA organization balances many priorities when it comes to water levels. Recreation is not their primary concern. Flood control and power generation are two of their priorities.

Q. Does TVA change the lake levels differently at certain times of the year?

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Word Usage

Be careful of the words you say
To keep them soft and sweet
You never know from day to day
Which ones you'll have to eat.
(anonymous)

There are some words that we use freely in our every-day conversations that can be disastrous and hurtful. "Should" and "Ought" are two words that can cause a simple, innocent conversation turn ugly in a heartbeat. They imply that a person "should" or "ought" to be behaving, or not, in a specific way. "You should be paying more attention to your neighbors." "You ought to be reading more books." "You shouldn't be acting so silly." "You ought to be ashamed of yourself." These statements are aimed at creating feelings of guilt and despair. What is taking place is that individuals are taking their own standards within their belief system to evaluate and to judge another person's behavior. Thus, it is another person's standards that are being used to promote their particular thinking, their value system, and their ideas of how we "Should" and "Ought" to behave and to believe. In a conversation in which an adult individual begins using "Should" and "Ought" our invisible "red flag" needs to shoot straight up and to sound an alarm.

If the usage of "Should" and "Ought" occurs, we have to remember that their belief system is not a part-time job?

See Ashurst, page 5A

Successful Mental Health

Dr. James Ray Ashurst
PH. D.



Chamber of Commerce

As the holiday season approaches, it is important to consider the impact of our shopping habits on our local economy. With the rise of online shopping, it's easy to overlook the small businesses that make our community unique. One way to make a positive impact is to shop locally. Our Local businesses are celebrating Plaid Friday on December 1st and Shop Small Saturday on December 2nd. By choosing to shop locally, you are helping to create job opportunities and allowing these businesses to continue contributing to the growth and prosperity of our community. Not only will you find one-of-a-kind gifts for your loved ones, but you will also be making a positive impact. We urge you to take the pledge to shop locally in Blairsville this season and beyond.

Our Annual Tour of Trees will begin December 1st and will run through December 31st. This is a wonderful opportunity for chamber members to showcase their businesses. We cur-

See Chamber, page 5A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



New House Speaker

It's official: We have a new Speaker of the People's House!

As you well know, the House voted to oust Speaker Kevin McCarthy on October 3rd. In the weeks following this unprecedented move, the House Republican Conference worked together to find the best person to lead us - and our nation - forward.

This proved to be a pivotal moment - one that required resolve, patience, and courage from House Republicans to reject the continuation of the Swamp's status quo and demand the real change in leadership that the American people deserve.

So, that's exactly what we did. We had numerous Speaker-Designates, including Majority Leader Steve Scalise, Judiciary Chair Jim Jordan, and Majority Whip Tom Emmer. While I wholeheartedly supported Jim Jordan through numerous ballots and closed-door meetings, our Conference had to find someone who could truly unite us and garner the 217 Republican votes needed to become Speaker.

Now, this wasn't a quick process. But it was essential that my colleagues and I handle this in a thoughtful and responsible manner in order to make the right choice for the American people.

Folks, I believe we did that by electing Mike Johnson to be the 56th Speaker of the People's House.

House Republicans unanimously elected Speaker Johnson - a feat that hasn't been accomplished since 2011. Mike is a rock-solid conservative, constitutional scholar, and a man of both faith and integrity. I'm confident that he will instill trust, transparency, and transformational change in the Speaker's Office, and I'm incredibly excited for the People's House to have a principled conservative at the helm.

This hasn't been an easy process, but democracy can be messy. And I believe it was essential for us to fight to get this decision right, so we can return - stronger and more united than ever - to working together to save our Republic.

Since electing Speaker Johnson, House Republicans have hit the ground running. Hours after Mike Johnson was sworn in as our new Speaker, we swiftly passed a bipartisan resolution reaffirming our nation's commitment to Israel's security and forcefully condemning Hamas' terrorist attacks against our strongest ally in the Middle East. In addition to sending a powerful message that the House stands with Israel in its greatest time of need, we also passed our fifth conservative single-subject spending bill.

See Clyde, page 5A

United States Congressman Representative

Andrew Clyde



Uncle Clay

Uncle Clay was papa's younger brother. He was shorter and smaller than Papa and his brothers. But, he had the same hair color and disposition as his brothers. However, my great Uncle had an attribute that exceeded that of his brothers. He was much more stubborn. Uncle Clay took me and six or seven of us cousins fishing on the Tennessee River when I was a little boy. He was gentle and kind toward us kids. However, the next Sunday we had a big family dinner at my Papa's house after church. After the meal I walked out to the shade tree in the front yard where all the men of the family were having a big discussion. I sat down just as he began a lengthy dissertation on the subject of eternal security and he quoted scripture to back up his claim. Many in the group disagreed with him. But, he wouldn't give an inch and held his ground in the discussion. Uncle Clay was very stubborn and you could not win an argument with him.

Let's go back in time 25 years from the previous mentioned event to 1950. Uncle Clay was tired of having no money. At a family gathering he announced that he and Aunt Exxie were moving their family to Chicago. He wanted a better life for his kids and wife. They said their goodbyes and left the next week. Clay tried to talk his brother "Coon" into making the trip. However, Papa refused to leave Trapptown because he was planting his cotton. Clay left about the time the cotton was just cracking the ground. He landed some kind of job that required him to grind steel, and he had to breathe dust and fumes all day long. However, he made more money than he'd ever had in his bank account back in Alabama.

He and his family came back home on vacation about lay-by time for the cotton. This was the time for the last cultivation of the cotton, and it was also about the time that Union Hill Congregational Church held its annual revival. Upon arriving home the first thing Clay wanted to do was to visit his brother Coon. My father remembers the event vividly. He said, "We were out in the fields chopping out the cotton while your grandfather was cultivating. Then we noticed a big new black and shiny Buick pull up to the edge of the field. Uncle got out of the car and walked toward your Uncle Bud and I. When he got close to us we noticed he was crying. He bent over and picked both of us boys up and gave us a bear hug. He looked over us and noticed our bare feet and then told us he was so sorry we were so poor."

Daddy and Uncle Bud didn't know they

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Composting

Compost is a welcome addition to any garden. It's a popular and effective method to improve the quality of your soil. It can also help you get rid of lawn debris such as grass clippings or leaves as they are falling. Composting is not difficult to do, but here are some tips so that you can start your own compost pile.

Compost is rich, dark humus that is the end product of the natural decomposition of plants or plant products. Using a compost pile will speed up the natural decomposition of plant material. Compost can improve soil drainage, structure, and help hold water and nutrients. The nutrients in compost will not be enough to replace fertilizing, but they can reduce fertilizing.

You can use just about any organic material for composting. Leaves, grass clippings, twigs, old annual or perennial flowers, old vegetable plants, straw, and sawdust can all be thrown into the compost pile. Try to avoid using insect or disease infested plants to reduce the spread of those plants the following season. You can put things like kitchen peelings and coffee grounds into the compost pile too. Kitchen scraps should be buried into existing compost so that they don't attract too many wild animals. Covering your compost pile will help keep animals out too. Avoid using highly processed foods because these will take longer to break down.

When making a compost pile, it's helpful to have something to contain it. A lot of different materials can be used from wire, fencing, wood pallets or concrete blocks. Leave some open spaces on the sides for ventilation. Good air circulation is important for successful compost. The bottom of the pile needs to be open to the soil to allow good drainage. Construct your pile in an out of the way place in your yard, in full sun.

Once you've constructed your container for the compost pile, start adding organic matter. Smaller pieces will decompose more quickly than large pieces of organic matter. Once you have a layer of organic matter in there, add in some garden soil or animal manure. These will add fungi, bacteria, insects, and worms to the pile. They're the critters responsible for breaking down the plant material into the humus that you add to your garden. You'll want to keep the pile moist, but not soggy.

Sometimes a concern with compost piles is that there might be an odor. If you turn the pile with a shovel at least once a month this will reduce the smell. A good functioning compost pile will heat up from the activity of the microbes de-

See Williams, page 5A

Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



Letters to the Editor

Re: "County Commissioner"

Dear Editor,
Unfortunately, I read the referenced Oct. 25 letter to the editor, and I am informed. While there could be some savings with five part-time commissioners, assuming they don't have offices, who is going to actually run the county, which is not a part-time job?

More than likely, they'll have to hire a county manager for a lot more \$\$\$ than what Lamar makes, resulting in an unelected person running the county. A lot of items can't wait for the next commissioner's meeting, where hopefully three of the five agree on what is needed.

I had to deal with five commissioners for many years. What a circus. "It's not my district." "I don't think I'll have the necessary support of two other commissioners." "Get it on next month's meeting agenda." These are some of the excuses and delays I have encountered. With a single person, the buck stops with that person; things get done in a timely manner. It only takes one election to vote out a single person, but it takes multiple elections with five.

Has Lamar been perfect? No, but he is right more often than some give him credit for accomplishing. Considering all Lamar has done for Union County in 20-plus years of service, that's darn good. I am well aware of what has happened in this county over the last 40 years.

Dick Bell

One More Thank You

Dear Editor,
I'd like to offer up one more thank you for Dustin Thompson at the Union County Recreation Department.

I appreciate the newspaper printing my last note but realized that I don't know Scotty and North Georgia News didn't know Dustin, a newer employee with the same last name. He's the guy that we interact with the most, so I didn't want to have him left out of the message.

Basketball season is now underway, and let's root for all of our youth football teams that are in the playoffs!

Josh Murauskas

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Paris... continued from Page 4A

A. Absolutely! You may have already noticed some changes very recently. During the summer they do a pretty good job of maintaining lake levels at or near full pool for boating and other recreation. However, if the rainfall levels are low, lake levels typically fluctuate accordingly. TVA does have a web site (TVA.com) and an app for your phone so you can keep up with lake levels and it shows their normal guide that they try to maintain assuming normal amounts of rainfall. For Lake Nottely daily water discharge information, residents can visit: <https://www.tva.com/environment/lake-levels/nottely>

Q. What are normal lake levels on Lake Nottely?

A. According to the TVA guide, the lake is at the lowest levels in the winter. For example, on February 11, 2021, the lake hit its lowest levels for the 2020/2021 Winter season at 1760.28 feet above sea level. Generally, it begins to rise in the later part of March

and continues until full pool by the middle of May. In another example, the lake hit its highest level for 2021 on May 5, at 1777.84 feet above sea level. The difference between the Winter 2021 low and Summer 2021 high is just over 17 feet for Lake Nottely. It remains at that general level until August or September if there is adequate rainfall. For comparison, Lake Chatuge saw a Winter 2020/2021 low of 1917.19 feet above sea level and a Summer 2021 high of 1926.17 feet above sea level. The difference between the low and high in 2021 for Lake Chatuge is almost 9 feet.

At the time of this writing (Nov 2, 2023), Lake Nottely stands at 1765.16 above sea level. This data is shown on the TVA Operating Guide for Lake Nottely. More specifically, the guide illustrates the lake level range goals set by TVA. The guide can be found here: <https://www.tva.com/environment/lake-levels/Nottely/Operating-Guide>

Ashurst... continued from Page 4A

tem came from their parents, grandparents, relatives, friends, or bosses, but necessarily not from ours. Furthermore, we have to be extremely careful that we don't question or evaluate our personal value system according to the standards of another person. Since we don't have the same historical background, our belief system may differ with their particular stan-

dards.

The issue is that each of us must develop our own personal belief system, which means analyzing and evaluating what we truthfully believe as our personal standards and not those of someone else.

A timely word may lessen stress, but

A loving word may heal and bless. - (anonymous)

Williams... continued from Page 4A

composing organic matter. The heat produced will kill off the odor causing bacteria. If you add manure to your pile there will be some initial odor, but as the pile matures the smell will go away. A well maintained compost pile should not have a strong odor.

Once the compost has a crumbly earth look and you

can no longer recognize the plant material it's ready to be added to the garden. If you add the organic material over time the compost will become ready a little at a time. If you have questions about creating or maintaining your compost pile contact your county Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

were poor. They had plenty to eat, clothing to wear and a good roof over their head. This comment upset them to the point of tears, so they ran to their momma and told them the story. Granny calmed her two sons and dried their tears. She explained to them that they were not poor and that they had a good life. After the boys calmed down she walked directly to the field where Clay and Papa were talking and lit into her brother-in-law. She told him that her boys had plenty to eat and clothing to wear. She ended the discussion by telling him, "I'll knock a knot on your head if you ever upset my boys again." Their uncle did not mean to upset his nephews. He actually felt sorry for his brother's family because they had no money. But, actually Papa's family was rich. They had all they needed.

Uncle Clay died back in the 1980s from emphysema that he contracted as a result of all those years working in the mills. He loved all of us kids and took time to do things with us. He was stubborn and would argue with a fence post over his beliefs. His tombstone reads,

Chamber...

continued from Page 4A

rently have 11 small trees available and eight wreaths available for purchase. If you are interested in decorating a tree or wreath, please give us a call at the Chamber 706-745-5789 or visit our website visitblairsville.com. Thank you for making life better in Blairsville.

Clyde...

continued from Page 4A

I'm certain that under Speaker Johnson's leadership, House Republicans will continue delivering tremendous wins to the American people. Soli Deo Gloria,
Andrew S. Clyde

Smith's Legion Chapter #2699 United Daughters of the Confederacy Presents General Edmund W. Pettus



The Smith's Legion Chapter, #2699, of the United Daughters of the Confederacy® (UDC), Blairsville, GA, invited Commander Mike Pettus, David W. Payne Camp, Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), Blairsville, to speak about his own distant cousin, Brigadier General Edmund W. Pettus, born on July 6, 1821, in Limestone County, Alabama. He was the youngest of nine children of John Pettus and Alice Taylor Winston and was a distant cousin of Jefferson Davis. He graduated from Clinton College, Smith County, Tennessee and studied law under William Cooper in Tusculum, Alabama, and was admitted to the bar in 1842, settling in Gainesville, Alabama where he began to practice law. He later married Mary L. Chapman, having three sons, two dying in infancy, and then had two daughters.

He was elected Solicitor for the 7th Judicial Circuit of Alabama. Later he served as a Lieutenant with the Alabama Volunteers during the Mexican - American War, and after the hostilities, moved to California. By 1853, he returned to Alabama, serving again as Solicitor. He was appointed Judge of that Circuit in 1855 until he resigned in 1858. He then relocated to the now extinct town of Cahaba in Dallas County, Alabama where he worked as a lawyer. In 1861, he was an enthusiastic champion of the Confederate cause and was a Democratic Party delegate to the Secession Convention in Mississippi, where his brother John was Governor.

Edmund helped organize the 20th Alabama Infantry and was made one of its first officers. On September 9, 1861, he was made the Regiment's Major and on October 8th, he became its Lieutenant Colonel. He served in the western theater of the War. During the Stones River Campaign, he was captured by Union soldiers on December 29, 1862, and exchanged a short time later for Union soldiers. He was captured again on May 1, 1863, while part of the surrendered garrisons

son that had been defending Port Gibson in Mississippi where he managed to escape and return to his own lines. He was promoted to Colonel on May 28th and given the command of the 20th Alabama.

During the 1863 Vicksburg Campaign, he and his regiment were part of the force defending Confederate control of the Mississippi River. When the garrison surrendered on July 4th, he was again a prisoner until his exchange on September 12th. Six days later, he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General, and on November 3rd, was given the Brigade command in the Army of the Tennessee. They participated in the Chattanooga Campaign, posted on the extreme southern slope of Missionary Ridge on November 24th and fought during the action the following day.

They took part in the Atlanta Campaign, fighting the battles of Kennesaw Mountain on June 27th, Atlanta on July 22nd, and Jonesboro from August 31st to September 1st. Beginning on December 17th, he temporarily led a Division in the Army of the Tennessee. During the 1865 Campaign of the Carolinas, he was sent to defend Columbia, South Carolina and fought at Bentonville from March 19th until the 21st. He was wounded in this fight with a hit to the right leg during the battle of the first day. On May 2nd, he was paroled from Salisbury, North Carolina and four months after the Confederacy surrendered, he was pardoned by President Andrew Johnson on October 20th.

After the War, Edmund returned to his law practice in Selma, Alabama. He served the State Delegation to the Democratic National Convention for more than two decades. With earnings from his law practice, he later bought some farmland. In 1896, at the age of 75, he ran for the US Senate as a Democrat and won, beating the incumbent. The State Legislature, rather than the voters, elected US Senators at that time. On March 4, 1897, he began service in the US Senate. The State Legislature re-elected him on January 26, 1903, and on January 22, 1907. This term would begin two years later in 1909.

While in the Senate, he served on several Committees. He supported the Gold Standard Act of 1900, favored taxes that benefited large landowners, opposed the war

with Spain, and opposed the Seventeenth Amendment to the US Constitution that US State Senators be elected by the State's citizens. During the debate of the Panama Canal in Congress, he supported the construction of the canal in Nicaragua instead. He worked for appropriations to build locks and dams on the Coosa River at Muscle Shoals and for other State improvements. Edmund died in Hot Springs, North Carolina on July 27, 1907, while still in the office and elected for the next term. He was buried in Live Oak Cemetery in Selma. In 1940, The Edmund Pettus Bridge was named for him, built across the Alabama River in Selma.

On the other side of the coin, in 1877, during the final year of Reconstruction, Edmund was the Grand Dragon of the Alabama Klan (KKK). At that time during Reconstruction, there was a lot of crime and they served to keep law and order. When running for the State Senate, his campaign relied on his successes in organizing and popularizing the Alabama Klan and his prominent opposition to the constitutional amendments following the War of Northern Aggression that elevated former slaves to the status of free citizens. In part, the bridge in Selma was named after him to memorialize his history of restraining and imprisoning the blacks in their quest for freedom after the war. In 1965, the bridge became a landmark for the Civil Rights Movement with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Smith's Legion Chapter meet most every 4th Saturday, 11 AM, at the Daventport Veteran's Building, Blairsville. Chapter members are from Towns, Union, and Fannin Counties of GA, and from Clay and Cherokee Counties of NC. Eligibility requirements for the UDC include women, 18 years of age and older, who have a Confederate Veteran in their blood line, lineal or collateral.

If you are interested in joining the UDC and you are not sure of your ancestry, we can help you search your family lineage. Individuals interested in helping to preserve Southern Heritage, but have no southern lineage, can join as an Associate.

For more information, please contact TARA62860@aol.com. There is also a local Sons of Confederate Veterans' (SCV) David W. Payne Camp #1633, SCV, Blairsville, should men be interested in joining their organization.

"Clay Stood with the Bible." Meanwhile, Papa never made much money and some of us still have that old farm. But we all inherited his love of family and the stories handed down to us over the years is what makes us rich.

Dyer...

continued from Page 4A

the Smoke Alarm Request link.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

as God builds your character. In the moment of adversity, you may feel stressed but you have the advantage of knowing the God who loves, rescues, and proves you.

Adversity is not like a heavy, horse-drawn cab from which you flee for your life. It is your opportunity to exult in hope and demonstrate your faith to those who may well wonder how you do it.