

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Outdoor Burning

This is the time of year when people want to get outside and burn the brush, leaves and debris that has accumulated over the fall and winter. Unfortunately, these debris fires can get out of control and start a wildfire; damaging forests and endangering homes. According to the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC), debris burning is Georgia's number one cause of wildfires.

Union County Fire Department and GFC are asking people to burn safely and to understand the responsibilities when burning debris. The following is some information provided by GFC on safe burning practices and information needed for burning debris.

When burning debris, first obtain a burning permit from the GFC. It is illegal to burn without a permit. The burning permit is easy to obtain by calling 1-877-OK2-Burn or by going on line at gtree.org. The permit requires some basic information. The GFC will issue a burning permit number if burning is allowed that day. There may be times where burning is not allowed and, in those cases, permits will not be issued.

Outdoor burning permits are for the burning of natural vegetative materials. It is unlawful to burn man made materials such as tires, shingles, plastics, lumber, household garbage, etc. Permits are also only good for the day they were issued.

Once you have a permit, it is time to get prepared. Check the weather and know the conditions for the day. Make sure that you have enough time to commit to burning the debris pile. Prepare tools that may be needed to help control the fire such as shovels, rakes and a water hose. Wear the proper clothing including long pants, long sleeves, boots, gloves and safety goggles.

When preparing the debris pile, make small piles and clear 25 feet or more around the pile. You should never use any flammable liquids to start the fire. Remain with the fire until all debris is burned. If small embers remain, extinguish them with the water hose before leaving the fire.

Land owners who burn debris are responsible for fire safety; what they burn; the smoke; and maintaining the fire on their property. Always remember to get a permit and practice all safety tips. Knowing your responsibilities and using sound safety practices can keep you safe and may prevent wildland fires.

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Intellectual

Dr. Rosalind Picard tells her story in a recent edition of "Christianity Today" magazine. She is founder and director of the Affective Computing Research Group at MIT. Her writing is usually published in scientific journals, on topics such as artificial intelligence, neurology, and learning. I recently wrote about Dr. Dunder Bechly to refute the trope that Christianity is anti-science. Dr. Picard's story disabuses the notion that Christianity is anti-intellectual.

Dr. Picard was a standout high school student who bought the idea that smart people need no religion. She babysat for a doctor and his wife, and they challenged her to read Proverbs in the Bible. She writes, "I expected to find phony miracles, made-up creatures and assorted gobbledygook. To my surprise, Proverbs was full of wisdom. I had to pause while reading and think." Inspired, she read the whole Bible. "While I never heard actual voices or anything to justify summoning a neurologist, I felt this strange sense of being spoken to. It was disturbing yet oddly attractive. I began wondering whether there really might be a God."

The Bible thoughtfully engages humanity's struggle to comprehend our existence. Hundreds of years before Christ, Greek philosophers formed the idea of Logos. They observed that something of a universal Mind, a central organizing principle, seemed to mimic human reasoning and permeate all reality. The New Testament was written in Greek, which connected it to that quest for wisdom. Os Guinness writes that despite Christianity's differences with the cultures of the day, there was an "overlap in their common love of language and the supreme place they all give to reason, to words, and to the art of communication. The opening words of the gospel of John are therefore titanic in their significance." Those words are, "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God" (John 1:1). That language engaged intellectuals among its original Greek readers.

Robert Morey flips the script on who is anti-intellectual. He challenges honest thinkers to explain how these could happen: everything from nothing; order from chaos; harmony from discord;

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. Why should we recycle?

A. There's less waste going to the landfills, it keeps wildlife habitats safe, and you are transforming something old into something new. Materials and natural resources aren't wasted. Energy is saved during the manufacturing process, and you are benefiting the environment. While we have made progress, we still have a long way to go with the recycling rate at 36% in 2017.

Q. What is the difference between the Plastic bottles marked #1 and #2?

A. Plastic bottles marked #1 in the triangle on the bottom, are known as PET (polyethylene terephthalate). These are generally soda bottles and other clear plastic bottles. They get recycled into fibers. Mainly used for triangle, carpet and pillow fill. Plastic bottles marked #2 in the triangle on the bottom are known as HDPE (high-density Polyethylene). These are bottles you cannot see through easily, generally plastic milk bottles and detergent bottles. These are recycled into new detergent and other bottles. We DO NOT recycle bottle tops; they are not made from the same plastic as recyclable bottles. We ask that you remove the lids and rinse your bottles, as bugs and mice are attracted to the residue in your bottles.

Q. What about cardboard?

A. Yes, we recycle cardboard. Please break down your cardboard boxes before you bring them to be recycled. Cardboard is taken to a mill in Atlanta where it is turned into fresh, new boxes. Please don't bring in wet cardboard because it can clog sorting machines. Throw it away so it doesn't contaminate the rest of your load.

Q. Can we recycle aluminum cans?

A. Yes, please rinse your cans but crushing them isn't necessary. The aluminum can is the most recycled item in the United States, as well as the most valuable. It can be recycled again and again and so efficiently that a can is regenerated and back on the shelf in as little as 60 days.

Along with being a good steward of the environment, I would like to remind everyone it's also important to be a good neighbor and a courteous driver. So, when you are driving don't forget to dim your headlights at night or turn them on when it is raining.

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

For Legalized Marijuana

Dear Editor,

First let me say I have tremendous respect for all law enforcement personnel. Now, I would like to answer Sheriff Mason's questions from a March 27 article in the North Georgia News.

1) Do I want marijuana grow houses that will surely see product going out the back door to the black market?

A) There would be no black market if it were legalized. The resources spent by county to enforce, prosecute and house offenders could be used in much more needed areas, such as the meth and opioid problems in this area. The businesses could be taxed. The sales could be taxed. This new industry would offer much-needed employment opportunities to this area. Let's define "marijuana grow house." They are essentially commercial greenhouses that OUR farmers can erect and grow a year-round cash generating crop, instead of having to sell property that has been in families for generations to developers who do not appreciate our beautiful landscape.

2) Do I want to share the road with my family and these people on a legal mind-altering drug?

A) Well, surprisingly, I was a law enforcement officer at one point in my life, and I have seen the effects of DUIs. They were all alcohol related. I have also seen accidents because people were hung over from alcohol and were operating a vehicle with diminished response from the residual effects. Marijuana has no residual effects. You do not smoke a joint on Monday and wake up groggy on Tuesday. Also, there have been zero deaths or ODs on cannabis.

But I have seen an alcoholic die, going through DTs screaming, hallucinating about spiders crawling all over him. He had a heart attack. I was 17 years old working as an assistant at a psychiatric facility in Macon. I found a friend dead from alcohol poisoning at 23 on the front

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Against Legalized Marijuana

Dear Editor,

People! Do yourself a favor and call our Gov. Brian Kemp at 1-404-656-1776 before May 12 to let him know we do not want Georgia to go the way of Colorado and other states that have legalized marijuana in some form. Inform Gov. Kemp that you do not want him to sign House Bill 324 into law. If you haven't read the article in last week's newspaper containing information from Sheriff Mack Mason, PLEASE do so, and call the above number of your governor! This is your chance to make a difference.

Sincerely,

Jean M. Holsapple

Downtown Development

Dear Editor,

The recently announced building that's going on the corner of Bob Head Street in Downtown Blairsville will add to the traffic problem at that intersection.

That problem was created when the ramp from Highway 515 was rerouted to Pat Haralson Drive. It previously intersected with Pat Haralson in front of Cook's Restaurant. Everyone who

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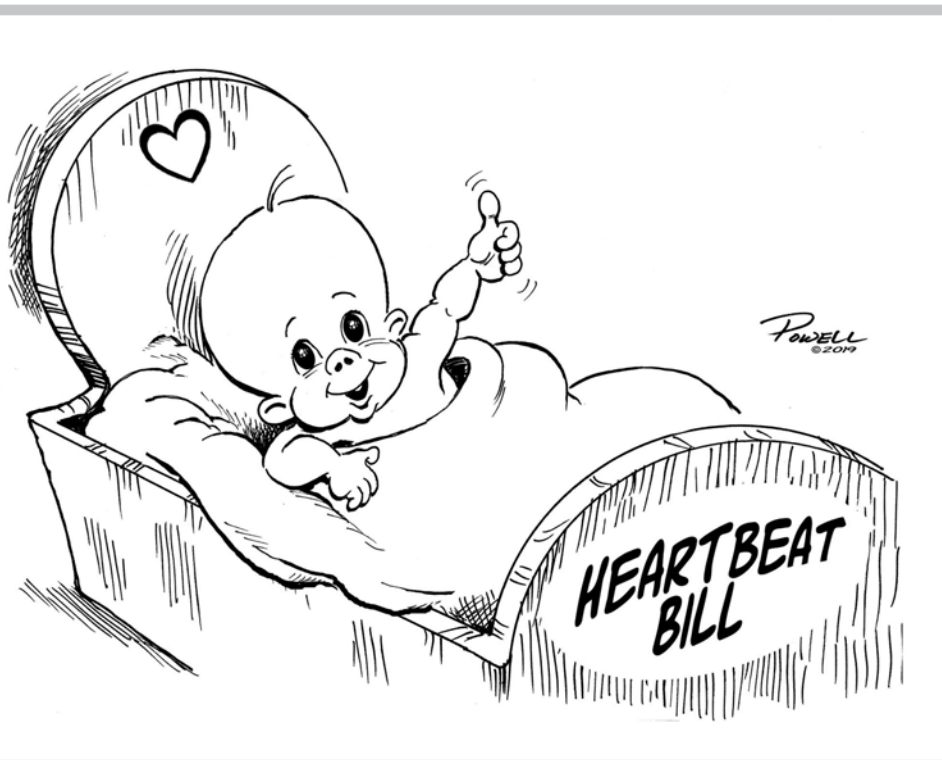
Climate Change: Another Proposed Solution

Dear Editor,

Amid more and more reports coming out of our government about the growing dangers from climate change, Republican lawmakers are now looking at solutions that will not hurt our economy. Last week, we looked at the Green New Deal, which offered sweeping changes in all areas of our economy to counter climate change. This week we will look at another idea.

The other proposal is a bill recently introduced into Congress, the Energy Innovation and

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WUI Conference

International Association of Fire Chiefs – WUI Conference - This week Michael Courey and I are attending the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Conference in Reno Nevada.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) represents the leadership of firefighters and emergency responders worldwide; whose members are the world's leading experts in firefighting, emergency medical services, terrorism response, hazardous materials spills, natural disasters, search and rescue, and public safety policy. With more fire in the WUI, greater all-hazard challenges taxing our resources and no expectation of change soon, it's critical to come together to discuss the issues impacting our industry. The WUI Conference brings together firefighters, researchers and leadership at the local, state, federal and tribal levels to collaborate on emerging issues and educate wildland-fire management.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) is where homes are built in or near forests and the risk of wildfire is increased because the homes are now sitting inside the natural fuel and everything in a house is fuel. This increased risk not only is due to the fuel that is around the homes, but also because of the limited access for First Responders and Emergency personnel to get into our neighborhoods with their wildfire equipment using the narrow, one lane roads that many of us use to get into and out of our neighborhoods. This limited access can be critical during a wildfire when citizens are trying to get out and fire fighters are trying to get in. If citizens wait too long to leave and meet a fire truck on a narrow road, not only are they in personal danger sitting in the smoke because the fire truck can't back up and this impasse creates a traffic jam and a delay getting equipment and personnel to the fire.

Firewise, Ready-Set-Go and Fire Adapted Communities offers solutions for citizens to use to reduce their risk and develop evacuation plans so everybody can survive a wildfire.

Michael Courey is the current Chair of the nationally acclaimed Towns County Firewise Citizen's Coalition that has administered the Firewise, Ready-Set-Go, and Fire Adapted Communities programs for the past 6 or so years. These wildfire awareness programs have helped keep Towns County citizens aware of the risk of wildfires in and around their communities and this awareness has resulted in fewer wildfire calls for our Fire Rescue department. This not only keeps property losses low but saves the county tax dollars by keeping the fire apparatus

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RC&D Executive Director
Frank Riley



Your Influence

Have you ever contemplated the influence of people upon our lives and what type of influence you may have on someone's life? There were two instances in my father's life that had profound influences upon his life as well as the lives of his not yet born children.

My father played summer baseball with a group of boys from Phil Campbell. These boys were managed by Roy Reeves. Roy set up games with neighboring towns and arranged transportation to the games for the boys. Roy funded the team through his wagers on the games they played. Roy owned a little gas station in town where many of his players worked for extra spending money. Most of the boys had no money to buy equipment. So, when a boy needed a new glove, spikes or a bat, Roy made sure the boy got what he needed. These purchases were not loans. They were gifts.

After my Dad and Mother graduated high school they settled down on our family farm. Dad went to work at a textile mill in Hackleburgh, Alabama. Dad worked and also played summer baseball for the mill. After I was born Dad hoped for advancement at the mill. However, he was told the mill would soon slow down and they were even disbanding the baseball team. Shortly afterward Dad was laid off and he decided to move to Chicago to find work. Dad had no money so Roy Reeves loaned him \$200 to make the trip and get settled into an apartment.

Papa didn't want Dad to leave home to find work in Chicago. Papa was also a proud man that didn't like to borrow money. After Dad had left on the train Papa found out that he had borrowed money from Roy Reeves. So, Papa went to Phil Campbell to pay off the money Dad had borrowed. Papa walked into the service station and asked, "Roy, how much money does my boy owe you?" Roy told Papa, "That's none of your business Mr. Cummings. That loan is between me and Paul. I know he will pay it back." Papa grinned and walked out of the service station. He was still mad at my Daddy for leaving, but he was proud because he knew his son would pay back the money he owed Roy Reeves.

Years later my Dad became a minister. He received news that his old friend, Roy, was sick with cancer. So, Dad went to see him. When Dad walked into his house Roy began to cry and said, "Paul, I need to apologize to you and the other boys because I was not a good influence on you." Dad couldn't believe his ears and said, "Roy, you'll never know the influence you had on me and I want to thank you for helping me

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Chamber of Commerce

Last week, the Chamber offered our local Eggs and Issues Breakfast for anyone in the community that was interested in learning the latest news and updates in Blairsville and Union County. The crowd in attendance heard from Mayor Conley about current projects in the city.

The Mayor began by sharing details about the new three-story building that's going to be constructed downtown by Cockerham Capital. The architect behind the design, David Goodspeed was in attendance as the Mayor displayed the rendering of the building. As many of you have most likely seen in the paper, Goodspeed incorporated the architectural design of the historical Courthouse into this latest building to grace downtown.

The Mayor also discussed the recent ground broken for the construction of Popeye's Chicken and Biscuits.

He also shared how the traffic at our airport increases each month and that the 34 han-

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Lime

Lime is a very important part of having healthy soil where we live. Knowing how much to apply and where to apply are very important considerations to effectively use lime. Let's talk about what lime does, why you need it, how much to apply, and how to apply it.

There are a couple of different types of lime that you can purchase. Ag lime is a very common type. It is made up of calcium, carbon, and oxygen.

Ag lime will do a very good job of raising the pH in your soil. Dolomitic lime also raises the pH level of soil, but it has magnesium in it as well. If your soil is deficient in magnesium, dolomitic lime is a good option to raise the soil pH, and to increase the amount of magnesium in your soil.

When you get to the bottom of it lime raises the pH in soil. If you recall from chemistry class, pH is basically a measure of the free hydrogen ions in a substance. In this case that substance is soil. pH is a scale that goes from 1 - 14. Numbers below 7 are acidic and numbers above 7 are basic. 7 is neutral. Our soil is going to be naturally acidic. I've seen soil reports with pH ranging from 4.5 - 5.5. Most plants like to have a pH of 6 - 6.5. The past couple of weeks I've been talking about fertilizers. pH is very important because it impacts how available the nutrients are to plants to be able to take them up. If the pH is low, then most plants won't be able to grow because they can't utilize the nutrients that are in the soil.

There's no way to accurately know how much lime you need to add with doing a soil test first. A soil test will make a recommendation for how much lime you should add based on your pH. It is possible to add too much lime. If you add lime year after year with looking at a soil test as a guide you may end up over liming your land. This can lead to a pH that is too high. You can run into similar issues as with a pH that is too low. A high pH is not common around here unless you've over applied lime. In the western half of the country soils naturally have a high pH.

In small areas lime can be applied with a push spreader. You want the lime to make as much contact with the soil as possible, so it may take a few days to water it in. Lime does not dissolve very well in water so it may take a while for the lime to take full effect. Lime can be bought in powder form or pelletized. Both work well, but the pelletized may make less of a mess. There is also liquid lime. Liquid lime can be effective, but it will take more product because it has been diluted down. Larger areas such as a pasture may need a spreader truck to apply the lime evenly

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Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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