

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Lightning Dangers

When we think of summer, we think of long sunny days and beautiful weather. However, there are times when the weather has been erratic and often dangerous. The summer has presented extreme heat and many afternoon thunderstorms. Those thunderstorms bring dangerous lightning that have resulted in several deaths in the U.S. this year. We would like to provide some facts on lightning and some safety tips to protect you and your family.

According to the National Weather Service (NWS), the death toll from lightning in 2018 has reached 15, with six of them in July alone. That is a significant jump from 2017, which had 16 deaths all year. The average over the last 10 years has been 28 with the highest being in 2016 with 40.

Death from a lightning strike is usually as a result of cardiac arrest or the heart stopping. The extremely high amount of electrical energy from the lightning strike runs through the body and disrupts the normal electrical activity of the heart, causing the heart to stop beating. Lightning can also cause major injuries resulting in permanent disability to its victims.

The best practice for lightning safety is to take shelter. When a thunderstorm is in the area you may assume that lightning is present. The NWS recommends that when you hear thunder, immediately move to safe shelter such as a home or building with electricity or plumbing. Stay in safe shelter at least 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder.

If you are indoors, stay off corded phones, computers and other electrical equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity. It is best to avoid plumbing, including sinks, baths and faucets. Also stay away from windows and doors, and stay off porches.

If you are caught outside with no safe shelter anywhere nearby, the following actions may reduce your risk: 1) Immediately get off elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges or peaks. 2) Never lie flat on the ground. 3) Never shelter under an isolated tree or use a cliff or rocky overhang for shelter. 4) Immediately get out and away from ponds, lakes and other bodies of water. 5) Stay away from objects that conduct electricity (barbed wire fences, power lines, windmills, etc.)

Summer afternoon thunderstorms can pop up in a moment's

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Flamethrower or Fireman

What happened in the congressional hearing this month with FBI agent Peter Strzok is a sad commentary on our times and culture. A fire is out of control.

The hearing began to degenerate when one congressman told Strzok, "I don't give a d--- what you appreciate." But chaos ensued when another congressman described Strzok lying and cheating on his wife. The room erupted into chaos with shouts of "insane asylum," "shame," and one yelling about taking medications.

Once politicians, comics, and protestors realized they could make headlines with shock value, it was only a matter of time before politeness became a quaint notion. Southern belles don't get the vapors over an affront to their sensibilities, gentlemen use crass language in front of women and children, and polite company is hard to find. Our culture has coarsened considerably, and it's a consuming fire.

It's even in the church. Mark Driscoll has been called the "cussing preacher." He lost his Mars Hill Church, but sadly not because of his potty mouth. Pastor Ed Young countered his influence on young preachers. "If we have to lower our communication to the level of scatological (think animal scat) humor, then we aren't thinking through how to communicate. We want to be very careful not to offend anyone with bad language. The gospel is offensive enough without throwing in such words."

Jesus was full of grace and truth, and did not use gratuitous and crass words for shock value. But He did find occasion to call certain religious leaders hypocrites, sons of hell, blind guides, fools, whitewashed tombs, sons of murderers, and brood of vipers (Matt. 23), all candid descriptions of elitists supplanting God's eternal truth.

We'd do well to follow the "Three Gates of Gold," Beth Day's antebellum poem. Is it true? Is it needful? Is it kind? The Bible warns, "See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, and sets on fire the course of life, and is set on fire by hell" (Jas. 3:5-6). It also urges, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification" (Eph. 4:29). Jesus' words are quite telling:

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

This week's questions and answers focus on Magistrate Court. The Magistrate Judge is an elected position, with Cary D. Cox being the elected official. These questions contain general information, and if you have further questions you should call their office at 706-439-6008, or stop by their office located in the Union County Courthouse at 65 Courthouse Street, Blairsville.

Q. What types of cases does the Magistrate Court hear?

A. This court hears criminal offenses such as misdemeanor bad check and shoplifting cases, as well as civil claims of \$15,000 or less. Magistrate Court is the court of first resort for many civil disputes, including foreclosures, garnishments, Fi-Fa, small claims, dispossession, abandoned vehicles and interrogatories. In criminal matters, they hold preliminary hearings, issue criminal warrants and search warrants to law enforcement, bond hearings, First Appearance Hearings, Bad Checks, and Petty Theft.

Q. If I need to have a civil case heard in Magistrate Court, what do I need to do?

A. The court cannot give legal advice, so it is always best to seek the advice of an attorney. The court can provide forms and give information on court procedure. A good resource for information on Magistrate Court is the Georgia Magistrate Council website: <https://georgiamagistratecouncil.com>. This website provides videos regarding court procedure along with providing forms for filing actions in Magistrate Court.

Q. How much does it cost to file a civil suit in Magistrate Court?

A. Filing fee is \$106, including service for one defendant. Any additional defendant service is \$50 for each defendant.

Q. Do I need an attorney to have my civil case heard in Magistrate Court?

A. No. In Magistrate Court an attorney is not required. However, legal proceedings require preparation, so attorneys familiar with court proceedings and procedure for assistance may be very helpful. It may be in your best interest to talk with an attorney before filing.

Q. Do I go to the Magistrate Court to evict tenants from

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Buying Drugs Online – How to Protect Your Kids

Where are kids getting drugs? Twenty years ago, the answer to this question would only have been: from classmates at school, from friends at a party, or from a medicine cabinet. Fast forward to today and you'll find that young people are also getting drugs online, perhaps now more than ever.

The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

Last fall, two Utah eighth graders overdosed and died after taking U-47700, a potent synthetic opioid also known as "pink," that they got from other teens who bought it online. Just the year before, a Minnesota teen overdosed and died after taking the synthetic psychedelic drug DPT he bought online.

As these tragic cases show, it is not hard for teens to use the internet to buy drugs with-

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Letters to the Editor

Patriotism and Our President

Dear Editor,
My family, like many of your readers, are very patriotic. My father served in the Army during World War I, myself in the Army in the late 1950s, and our son-in-law, a graduate of the Air Force Academy, served in the first Gulf War. But where is our president? He acts as though he is a puppet on a string speaking words put into his mouth by Vladimir Putin. The president creates fights with our allies and attacks the integrity of our intelligence agencies and the FBI. Presidents Eisenhower and Reagan, amongst others, must be "turning in their graves" at this turn of events.

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Icons

Dear Editor,
Zell Miller, Wayne Abercrombie, Billy Poteete, Robert Head and Jo George: these individuals were absolutely phenomenal in character, because each cared about the people in our community. They gave, gave and gave to others due to their integrity and dignity. They are labeled as "awesome" in nature and in spirit. They are classified as "icons," which is the highest compliment bestowed on another human being.

The sadness we all may have is that these "icons" may have never heard such widespread praise while they were among us. Sadly, they missed our praise because their physical bodies had already experienced death. The music had stopped for them.

As a community, we might continue to "miss the boat" and watch it sail into an ocean of eternity because we fail to thank the people in our lives who are being an "icon" to us. These iconic individuals perhaps never fully knew the

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A Perfect World

Dear Editor,
Have you ever thought what it would be like to live in a perfect world, where everyone loved one another and no one looked down on each other, but respected and encouraged each other? A place where death was never spoken of again and saying goodbye to a loved one who was going in the armed forces was a thing of the past, and where there are no more wars or rumors of war, only peace on earth as it is in heaven. A perfect world where no one ever makes a mistake, for sin no longer lives there, and heartaches and disappointments never enter our minds, just harmony and joy unspeakable and full of joy. In the Bible, in Revelation 21:4, the Lord says: "And God shall wipe away all tears from

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Letters to the Editor

Tariffs

Dear Editor,
In the July 4 edition of the *North Georgia News*, editor Shawn Jarrard explained the cost of the paper was increasing to 75 cents. His explanation was due to higher tariffs from Canadian newsprint. While I understand his concern, I look at it from an opportunistic view. This is an opportunity for companies in the USA to build mills producing newsprint, creating more jobs and less dependence on other countries. Mr. Jarrard said, "Tariffs are bad for American businesses and, by extension, the American people, because tariffs force us to pay more for goods coming into the country."

While some businesses may be affected negatively by tariffs, the greater good is a more level playing field for most all American businesses. President Trump took the bold step no other president had the guts to do by forcing countries who have been eating our lunch by hundreds of billions with a "b" in trade deficits to level that playing field.

Chris Crawford
Editor's Note: According to the National Newspaper Association, the U.S. requires 75 percent less newsprint today than it did a decade ago, due to the digital shift of major national daily newspapers. Local newspapers are faring well, though they require much less paper than the big dailies. The bottom line: Demand for newsprint just isn't what it used to be, which is why we believe new investment in newsprint by American entrepreneurs seems highly unlikely. In this instance and others, marketplace interference by Uncle Sam is bad for America.

Christian Nation?

Dear Editor,
I recently noted that some letter writers state that our country is a Christian Nation. Although many of our founding fathers were indeed Christians, some were not. As a body, their belief was that of "Freedom of Religion."

Religion covers a lot of ground, i.e. Judeo-Christian, Islam, Hinduism, etc. In fact, this nation was initially populated by persons escaping a religion that regulated thought and belief. They wanted to be free to believe as they wished (or not believe). To now promote your fellow citizens to believe a certain segment of the body religion flies in the face of our beloved Constitution.

You may wish to accept your interpretation of the words, or accept it as it was written, at least read it. Please do not think I'm denigrating your religion or your belief; I'm not. I just believe in "Freedom of Religion."

Charles Sowers

Trash or Treasure

One Man's Trash Is Another Man's Treasure

I have always collected things other folks would throw in the garbage. I have a steel pin used by my great-grandfather in the construction of his saw mill. I have a couple of old wagon spokes from my grandfather's Florence Wagon. I have an old maple syrup bucket from a friend's Maple Farm in Vermont. One time while roaming the woods, I found an old jar containing moonshine. I have that jar minus the shine on my shelf. A lot of people call this junk, but I can look at each item and tell you a story about it. I have had this habit of collecting things for many years.

On a Saturday before Easter in 1969, I found something for my collection. It was a warm day, and I was in the woods next to my house when I spotted a garter snake at my feet. I quickly caught the snake and ran home with my new prize. I knew better than to show it to my mother. So, I placed the snake in a jar and punched holes in the lid. Now, I remember the holes were bigger around than the snake's body, but I didn't know too much about circumference in the fourth grade.

I fully expected to keep the snake until I grew up. So, I placed the snake in the basement where my mother would never find it. The next morning, my mother was up early to make sure we got to Easter Services on time. She went downstairs to bring up our freshly washed and pressed clothes. As she started back up the steps, she looked down and felt the grip of terrible fear as she observed this giant snake on her steps. Her perception of the snake was very different than mine. Everyone in the house was awakened by the sounds of chopping coming from the basement and a few words I had never heard spoken by my mother.

I will never forget the look on my Dad's face when he saw my mother holding an ax and the four missing steps in the basement stairs. I made sure my mother never found that jar with the holes in it, and my father never questioned that mother had seen a 6-foot long Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake in our basement. But, I knew better. My treasured snake was nothing but fear to my mother.

When I was 17, my parents went out of town and I was left at home in charge of the house. Dad asked me to clean up the garage while he was gone. I was in the process of cleaning when a truck pulled up in front of the house. A man walked up to me and inquired about pur-

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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Beware the Worms

Fall armyworms can be a menace to lawns, pastures, and grass crops such as corn and sorghum. They arrive every year in the late summer or early fall. They can be very damaging to your plants, so let's look at what they are, how to spot them quickly, and what you can do for management of them.

Fall armyworms have four life stages. They overwinter in Florida, as they can only survive a mild winter. Each successive generation moves northward, causing a lot of damage as they advance. The females will lay egg masses of up to 700 eggs at a time. After coming out of their eggs, the larvae, the caterpillar stage, will be about one quarter to three quarters of an inch long. The larvae go through six stages of development. Each stage eats more than the one before it. However, the final stage of larval development eats more than all the other stages combined. Armyworms take two to three weeks to reach the pupal stage, where they go into cocoons. After about a week in the cocoon, the armyworm moth will emerge. These moths will travel further northward and lay eggs repeating the cycle.

Larval stage is when they will do damage to lawns, pastures, and grass crops. At this stage, they can get up to 1.5 inches long. Their coloring can vary from light green to nearly black with dark stripes that stretch horizontally down the length of their body. Their most distinct characteristic and the best way to identify them is by the inverted Y shape on the head. The point of the Y is at the back of the head.

Signs to look for are flocks of birds in the morning and evening. That is when armyworms will do most of their feeding. During the heat of the day, they will retreat to the thatch below. The armyworms will preferentially feed on tender green vegetation. Damage from armyworms can also look like thin brown patches. One method of checking for armyworms is to mix two tablespoons of lemon-scented dish soap with a gallon of water, and then pour that into a one square foot area. That will irritate the worms and make them crawl up so that they're more visible. The soapy water method works on all caterpillars, not just armyworms. Usually treatment is recommended if there are more than three armyworms per square foot.

If you have a well-established lawn, armyworms may feed on the grass but most likely will not kill the grass, however the damage is unsightly. The only really effective way to control armyworms is through insecticides, and even then control will be very difficult on full grown

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RC&D

Grassroots Efforts Lead to WUI Success

The following is an excerpt from an article that I wrote for the International Association of Fire Chiefs' "On Scene" newsletter. November, March, and April are the most dangerous months for wildfires here in North Georgia. Leaves are on the ground, and with the high winds and low humidity, we are living in a tinderbox and are just one spark away from disaster.

Wildland fire in our own backyards is something most of us think will never happen, but it only takes one match, hot ashes dumped in the yard, or a bonfire that we were sure was out, to bring a disaster right under our porch and into our living room. Grassroots leadership for the Ready, Set, Go! (RSG) Program, Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) and Firewise (FW) is key to successful wildland-fire education. The Towns

RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



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North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Photographer

Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - One Year \$40. 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. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

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