

# Opinions

# Everybody has one...

## National Preparedness Month

Disasters are unpredictable and can change our lives instantly. Being proactive and taking the time now to prepare for potential future incidents could save time and prevent the loss of life. Union County Emergency Management Agency (UCEMA), in partnership with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency, is encouraging all residents to take advantage of this year's National Preparedness Month (NPM).

If you've seen the news recently, you know that emergencies happen unexpectedly in communities just like ours. We must consider disasters that may affect our area such as wildfires, severe weather including thunderstorms, flooding, tornados, and winter weather. These can have a severe impact on our community. It's for those reasons that we should make a conscious effort to join NPM this year and become more prepared to face an emergency.

The theme for National Preparedness Month this year is "Start a Conversation" and asks citizens to take action now. Week one encourages people to "Plan Ahead" by learning what disasters may affect you and how to prepare for them. Week two puts this into action by "Making a Plan." Week three's theme encourages everyone to "Build a Kit" that can sustain you and your family for a few days after a disaster. Week four wants everyone to "Stay Informed" to what is happening when a disaster strikes.

There are so many things that we can do to prepare. It can simply start with a conversation by asking, "What would we do if this emergency happened here?" By developing an emergency plan with our families, communities, congregations, neighbors, and co-workers, we can ensure that everyone knows what resources are available in an emergency and what we need to do. We can work as a team to make our communities, our neighborhoods, and our own families safer.

Take time to research each theme, develop a plan, and put it into action. It is always a good practice to educate and involve everyone in your household in preparedness. Make sure to consider the costs associated with disasters and save for an emergency. Also, know how to take practical safety steps like shutting off water and gas.

See Dyer, page 5A

**Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief**  
*David Dyer*



## Romance of Restlessness

Travel. Politics. Relationships. Money. These topics have something in common. I'll call it the romance of restlessness, a deep, personal desire for something better, more, or different. My list here includes only a few objects of restlessness.

George Bailey, the protagonist in the film, "It's A Wonderful Life," is restless for travel. To him, the most exciting sounds in the world are anchor chains, plane motors, and train whistles. Upon high school graduation, he wants a suitcase big enough for "a thousand and one nights." To his father's offer of a job, his clumsy response is, "I couldn't face being cooped up for the rest of my life in a shabby little office."

Bailey is driven to see the world. His fictional passion is no match for the real, heated rhetoric about politics and the future of our country. Citizens are restless to say the least, and all sides agree much is at stake. Restless people are romanced by the prospect of change in the economy, as well as their careers or personal affairs.

We see restlessness in the Bible. The woman at the well was clearly discontented with her five previous husbands. She mentioned the coming Messiah. Jesus replied, "I who speak to you am He," as He offered living water. A young man unfulfilled by his wealth and piety was right to ask Jesus about eternal life. Even Pilate, the governor who had access to Roman learning and Greek philosophy, asked Jesus a restless question, "What is truth?" Saul was so restless as to be angry, chasing and persecuting Christians even in foreign cities. But Jesus showed him the way to peace on the road to Damascus.

In "Confessions" St. Augustine writes, "Thou hast made us for thyself and restless is our heart until it comes to rest in thee." This calls to mind Jesus' promise, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). St. Augustine continues: "Where do you go along these rugged paths? Why then will you wander farther and farther in these difficult and toilsome ways? There is no rest where you seek it." He knew only too well. The romance of a hedonistic lifestyle left him restless until he found his peace in Christ.

See Fowler, page 5A

**All Things New**

*Wayne Fowler*



## Commissioner's Questions

### Q. When is the next Electronics Recycling and Document Destruction Event here in Union County?

A. This event is scheduled for Saturday, October 19, 2024 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Union County Transfer Station. Watch for volunteers and for signs as you approach the facility. You will just drive up and unload your electronics to be recycled and your documents that need to be shredded, and the people there will handle the rest. More information on the event, including a list of what items will be accepted, can be found on the Union County website at [www.unioncountygga.gov](http://www.unioncountygga.gov).

### Q. Will the Electronics Recycling and Document Destruction Event be cancelled if it is raining?

A. Unfortunately, the electronics that are being recycled cannot be exposed to moisture or they are unable to recycle them. Also, the big shredder that is used to destroy personal documents cannot shred if there is moisture in the air. The shredded material just gets clogged up and will not shred properly and the equipment can be damaged. If it is going to be cancelled, posts will be made on the Union County Facebook page, and it will also be on the Union County website listed in the previous question.

### Q. Why should I recycle my electronics?

A. First, it keeps recyclable materials out of landfills. If we fill up a truck with recyclable electronics, that is one truck load of materials that is not going into a landfill. Many electronic devices can be reused, or they contain a variety of materials that can be recycled. Atlanta Recycling Solutions, the company that will be at the event accepting electronics, will securely destroy any sensitive information that may be contained on electronic devices. They will adhere to a zero-landfill policy. Most people don't realize it, but all electronic devices contain aluminum. Aluminum is a non-renewable resource, which means that once all the aluminum on earth is used there is no more. So, it helps to be able to get the aluminum out of these electronic devices.

### Q. What does Document Destruction do with my sensitive documents that they shred?

A. They shred your documents on site in a large shredder.

See Paris, page 5A

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**

*Lamar Paris*



## Mindfulness

Have you ever been in a conversation with a friend, and your mind begins to take a much needed vacation? Your friend is telling you a good story, and part of you is in beautiful Hawaii, exciting New York, or gorgeous Georgia. All of a sudden you hear, "Well, what do you think?"

Oh my, you are caught, and you try your best to come up with an innocuous comment as if you have been hanging on his or her every portion of the conversation. Who hasn't been in such a predicament? It isn't that the person's conversation is boring or too mundane but is simply a matter of human nature. We've been caught not being mindful of what was going on in our presence.

Mindfulness is maintaining who is presently in our personal arena. An awareness, minute-by-minute, of paying attention to what is happening around us. A friend has entered our protected arena and by doing so is asking for

See Ashurst, page 5A

**Successful Mental Health**  
*Dr. James Ray Ashurst*  
PH.D.



## Letters to the Editor

### Do the Math

Dear Editor,  
V.P. Harris states that the foundation of her presidential campaign is to increase taxes on corporations to benefit the middle class. Won't work. Those corporations will, as part of a free market, pass through to the consumer (i.e., the middle class) the expenses (i.e., more taxes) those corporations pay; it's basic economic principle that "the consumer ultimately pays." Thus, the middle class (i.e., those consumers) will actually pay an indirect tax (another economic principle), and they will not really receive the benefits V.P. Harris promises. Accordingly, this additional inflation will ultimately be borne by the middle class. Another example of if it's too good to be true, it probably isn't.

Claude Spears

### Cummings on the AT

Dear Editor,  
I want to compliment Mickey Cummings on a well-written article in the September 11 issue of North Georgia News entitled "Hospitality," in which he described section hiking the Appalachian Trail over a period of several years with other county agents. I have hiked two AT sections in my lifetime, and each section was the experience of a lifetime.

I started hiking solo but made so many friends along the way that it was not really solo hiking at all. Mickey's story brought back many pleasant memories, and I feel motivated to resume hiking where I left off; or perhaps as Mickey did, complete the final portion of the trail in Maine while time is still on my side. With appreciation,  
Mark Ogilvie

### Re: Stones & Glass Houses

Dear Editor,  
I would like to thank Mr. Steve Psiaki for his letter titled Stones & Glass Houses. I've been wanting to write a response to the people who condemn us Democrats and freely spread their false narrative, but it made me so angry I didn't want to come off as a loose cannon, but you said it perfectly. I also don't believe in "on a whim abortion," and I'm not immoral, corrupt or ungodly. Thanks for speaking up for those of us who are kind and respectful and do care and want the best for our country.  
Sharon Hill

## Letters to the Editor

### The Middle Class Will Benefit

Dear Editor,  
If our knowledge of a presidential candidate's position on issues of concern are limited to the political ads we see on television, then we tend to be poorly informed. So I went online to search for those positions put forth by the underdog in this race, Kamala Harris, and I found some interesting positions. Not only does she intend to extend \$35 a month insulin to every diabetic (not just those on Medicare), but she also proposes to limit out-of-pocket drug cost to no more than \$2,000 a year. For us seniors, those under treatment for cancer, and those with chronic illnesses, this would be a wonderful blessing.

What I particularly liked was her emphasis on benefits for our young, growing families and our middle class. By the time you are in your seventh decade like I am, your finances have settled and your outgo is primarily medical. But young families are starting a career, having children, dealing with schools, and trying to make ends meet. Kamala intends to provide a \$6,000 tax break to families with a newborn during the first year. That will provide a lot of diapers and other essentials while allowing them to keep most of their meager salaries. Maybe more moth-

See Retter, page 5A

### Kratom

Dear People of Union County,  
I am hopeful that by sharing this I can inform you about kratom and its deadly affects. First off, kratom is legal in Georgia and anyone over 21 can purchase. You can buy it here in Blairsville, and you don't notice it because normally it is kept behind the counter... plus, if you don't use it or know someone who does, your eyes are not looking for it. Four months ago I lost my son. He died due to mixing his prescribed antidepressant with kratom. He was wade fishing in waste deep water, collapsed and drowned. I am heartbroken. He was 32 years old, did not smoke, drink or ever use illegal drugs. He left behind a wife and a 10-year-old daughter.

This is what I can tell you about kratom: Much remains unknown about how to safely consume kratom, and people are left on their own to determine product safety. Product labeling lacks dosing instructions, potency, or warnings about possible interactions with other drugs or warnings about existing medical conditions. Medical examiners have found kratom alone responsible for many fatal overdoses, but most deaths occur when kratom is mixed with other substances, mainly drugs used to treat an-

See Cave, page 5A

## Yankee Cousins

Papa's younger sister, Inez, lost her husband in a car accident when their son, Harold, was a baby. Inez decided to begin a new life, so she went to Chicago to live with her brother Clay. She soon found a job and met a fellow that would soon become her husband. John Porcurro was one of the kindest persons you would ever want to know. Inez and John were happy, and soon another young man was born to the family. His name was also John. Everyone called him Little John.

Those two boys loved visiting their family in Alabama, and they greatly admired their two cousins, Paul and Bud. Harold and Little John were easy targets for their older cousins. The schemes they fell into were easily hatched by my father and uncle. The first one of note happened one morning at the crack of daylight. The first chore of the day for Dad and Uncle Bud was to milk the family's two milk cows. Harold and Little John were so excited about milking these cows that sleep evaded them on the night prior to the event. The next morning the four boys walked to the barn while Little John and Harold shot question after question toward their cousins. Imagine a Chicago accent with these words. "Paul, how does the cow make milk? Bud, where does the milk come out of the cow? Will the cow kick you?" When asked where they got their milk in Chicago, Harold replied, "From the store."

Dad asked his cousins if they would like to milk a cow, and of course they did. Dad explained, "Go into that lot and catch that little cow. One of you should hold onto the neck and the other should place the milk bucket under the cow. Afterwards, you should pump the tail up and down and the milk will come out into the bucket." Papa was working on his tractor when he began to hear laughter coming from the barnyard. Papa looked across the yard toward the barn and watched as his nephews were drug, kicked and stomped by the 400-pound calf.

About a week later the boys decided they would go squirrel hunting. At the bottom of a bluff the boys noticed a big hornets' nest up a white oak tree. Harold and Little John decided to shoot the thing down and take it home. Dad and Uncle Bud grinned while presenting Harold with the gun. Uncle Bud said, "Wait til we get to the top of the bluff so we can watch from that vantage point." Dad and his brother watched their two younger cousins get stung about 20 times by a bunch of angry hornets. Papa whipped his two sons over this incident. Dad tried to explain, "When Harold and Johnny have made up their mind to do something, there is no talking them

See Cummings, page 5A

**Around The Farm**

*Mickey Cummings*



## Leaf Color

With the cooler temperatures arriving, Fall is on everyone's mind. A big part of that is the change in leaf color. Our peak leaf color time is usually in mid-October. In the mountains the colors can make a beautiful sight. But why don't evergreens lose their leaves, and why are there all the different colors? Let's talk about it so that as the leaves change this year you can show off your scientific knowledge to your friends!

Firstly, leaves can change color for a variety of reasons. Disease, drought, nutrient deficiency among other things are all reasons why leaves can change colors. In the plants cells there is a chemical called chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is crucial to the plant. Chlorophyll converts the light energy into chemical energy in a process called photosynthesis. That chemical energy is used by the plant for growth and reproduction. If you eat a plant then you're ingesting that energy too. If you eat an animal that has been eating plants you're still ingesting that energy. Photosynthesis is an amazing process that is one of the biggest building blocks of life.

The chlorophyll can absorb many wavelengths of light. However, the green wavelengths are not absorbed but reflected. This gives leaves the green color that we see. Next to the chlorophyll in the plant leaves there are other chemicals that serve as a buffer to protect the chlorophyll. These other chemicals are pigments and they absorb the wavelengths of light that would be dangerous to the chlorophyll. These pigments vary in the color that they reflect from yellow to orange to red.

As the temperature starts to drop and the days get shorter, chlorophyll will start to break down in the leaves and stop converting light energy to chemical energy. During the growing season, there is so much chlorophyll in the leaves that the green color overpowers the pigments yellow to orange. However, with the chlorophyll beginning to break down, the pigment's coloring begins to show through. Different species of plants will have different levels of chlorophyll. The mixing of chlorophyll and pigment will result in the different colors of leaves that we see in the fall. The weather can affect the intensity of the leaf color. Colors will be more intense with rainy and overcast days.

While the leaves are changing color, the tree will also begin to create a special layer of cells at the point of attachment for the leaf to the tree. This layer of cells will seal the tree off from the leaf so that an open wound is not left when the leaf falls by its own weight.

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**Watching and Working**

*Jacob Williams*



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**Paris... continued from Page 4A**

Then when they go back to their main office, they shred everything again. So, your sensitive documents are shredded twice and then they are baled into large bales. These bales of shredded paper are then recycled.

**Q. Why can't we have an Electronics Recycling and Document Destruction event quarterly or even twice a year?**

A. GREAT NEWS! The company that provides this service is now coming to Union County twice a year – once in the Springtime and once in

the Fall. You now have two options for recycling these types of items.

**Q. Is the county still accepting items for recycling at the Transfer Station?**

A. Absolutely. We hope as many of you as possible are able to recycle your newspapers and most any kind of paper, corrugated cardboard, aluminum, and glass. We even have a glass crusher that turns all glass into reuseable pebbles or granules. We've come a long way in recycling in Union County.

**Retter... continued from Page 4A**

ers would be able to stay home with their newborns.

And if they want to start a small business, she intends to provide a \$50,000 tax deduction (a raise from the current \$5,000). To help them with their first home purchase, she wants to assist them with a \$25,000 down payment. Now this is what I think of as investing in the future of this country. Investing in our young people who are our future. Helping them build equity for their futures.

Taxes are always a big deal, so it is comforting to see that she has pledged not to raise taxes on anyone earning less than \$400,000 a year. Does anyone in Union County earn that much a year? I guess we could wish we fell into that

category, as it would be a nice "problem" to have! And since I don't have a net worth of over \$100,000,000, I don't have to worry about her proposed tax on unrealized capital gains. That was a real relief, but frankly, if I had that much wealth, I doubt I would be worried about it. Finally, she has said that she wants to end taxes on tip income. That would include most of our service people who need it the most because they are the lowest paid.

Of course, I do wish she would come around to the position of not taxing Social Security, a tax given to us by Ronald Reagan. That would be a really nice benefit for us seniors.

Respectfully Submitted,  
**Candy Retter**

**Ashurst... continued from Page 4A**

our full attention. Mindfulness is when we are complying. Our mind may be tempted to wander the wide open spaces. However, we do have the ability and capacity to reign it in.

If we aren't careful, we stop mentally and emotionally being in the present, and we begin "playing in the past" or "rehearsing" for the future. We use up so much of our valuable time in the past or in our future. There is not one thing we can do to undo our past experiences. Whether good or devastating, the past is gone – kaput. You and I can certainly learn from the good or bad of past situations. However, to allow our thoughts and emotions to homestead a location in our past is not only a waste of time, but also a loss of our energy.

Furthermore, if our

minds aren't roaming our past, and we aren't in the here-and-now, then we are preoccupied with the future. We become mentally obsessed with demands, promises, and expectations of tomorrow. Even though we may realize that the day after today is a promissory note, we still take the risk of living tomorrow today. We imagine all sorts of situations, bad or good, about tomorrow and the day after that and the day after that. We find it difficult to remain mindful of today because we are concentrating on future days. We are intriguing creatures of God – we live in a past which we can't do anything about, or in a future of which we are not guaranteed. Mindfulness is living in the moment, ever mindful of whom we are with.

**Cave... continued from Page 4A**

ety and depression, people not knowing the risk.

Surprisingly, health care professionals have little knowledge of the risk of prescribing antidepressants (specifically SSRIs) to patients admitting they use kratom.

People use kratom for various reasons, i.e. pain, anxiety, depression, opioid withdrawal, to increase energy.

Kratom is not an approved drug nor is it considered a food, but it is marketed as a way to treat anxiety, depression, stress, pain and quell the symptoms of opioid withdrawal.

Kratom businesses compete with luring marketing messages like "natural," "organic," "supplement" ... boasting about "therapeutic benefits."

There are no non-biased scientific studies to back the claims of kratom's therapeutic benefits.

Scientists are currently trying to determine how and why people are dying from kratom.

Chronic use can cause physical and psychological addiction. Kratom has been linked to seizures.

There is no widely recognized diagnosis for "kratom use disorder," and if you're lucky enough to find a treatment facility, kratom withdrawal is treated with Suboxone.

There are no laws at the federal level requiring companies to alert people to the risk of combining kratom with other substances or warnings about existing medical conditions.

Kratom is basically unregulated by the FDA, leaving consumers on their own to determine its safety.

Lawmakers are voting on bills after admitting they've never heard of kratom.

With no federal oversight of the kratom industry, The American Kratom Association has emerged as the predominant lobbying force in setting regulations that govern its own \$1.5 billion industry.

My opinion is they need to pull it from the shelves until more scientific research can be done.

My advice is read about kratom... too many people are dying because they don't know the dangers. #KRATOMKILLS  
**Susan Cave**

**Cummings... continued from Page 4A**

out of it. They have to learn by experience. I bet they never shoot another hornets' nest."

Another week passed and the boys decided to go opossum hunting. The dogs treed up a big hemlock. Next, the dogs ran something into a hole in the ground. So, Dad cut a long slender hickory and sharpened one end. The sharp end of the limb was pushed into the hole until it hit something soft. Then Dad twisted the limb until the critter's fur was wrapped around the limb. This technique allowed Dad to pull the big fat opossum out of the hole. Harold and Little John were amazed at the skills of their two cousins. Later, on the way back home, the dogs struck another track and again chased a critter into a hole. As the boys got to the hole, Dad smelled something and stated

they should go on home. But, Harold and Little John wanted to pull another hornets' nest from the hole in the ground. So, Dad cut another hickory stick and told his cousins to get going. "Bud and I will be making our way back to the house." Dad and Uncle Bud walked 100 yards away and watched as their cousins pulled a skunk from the hole. The boys got home and the smell woke up Papa and Granny. Their clothes had to be burned, and the young men washed in buttermilk and then in tomato juice, which removed most of the smell.

After Harold and Little John went home, Papa, Granny, Dad and Uncle Bud were sitting around the dinner table, and Uncle Bud asked his Daddy, "Are Paul and I as dumb as our cousins?" Papa tried to hide his laugh, but, a chuckle escaped as he replied, "I hope not."

**Williams... continued from Page 4A**

Not all trees lose their leaves in the fall. Evergreens such as pines, hemlocks, hollies, and rhododendrons have a thicker coating of wax around their leaves. All leaves have a thin coating of wax that is used to protect them from drying out. On evergreen trees, the wax coating is thicker and can protect the leaves through the winter. Evergreens will still lose leaves, but they don't lose them all at one time. They'll completely replace all of their leaves over a period of 2-4 years.

This year it seems like some trees are turning color and dropping leaves sooner than other years. This is likely because of the drought that we have had this year and last year. The droughts have put the trees under stress, leading to less uniform leaf drop.

If you have questions about leaf color contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

**Fowler... continued from Page 4A**

The romance of restlessness for something new, something different, demands a response. Answer with new places, the politics of change, human relationships, or more wealth, and you will never satisfy your deepest longing. Those are among the siren calls of vain things that charm you most. You are made to respond to your Creator and Savior who loves you and calls to your heart. As the old hymn says, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all." www.mountainchristian.net

**Chamber... continued from Page 4A**

forward to seeing your creative booths and amazing costumes! Get ready—Tour of the Trees is just around the corner! We will be sharing more details about the trees, wreaths, and gingerbread houses soon. Registration opens on October 1st, and spots are limited, so keep your eyes peeled to secure your place!

Life is better in Blairsville!

**Dyer... continued from Page 4A**

As we here at UCEMA continue to prepare for disasters, we want to remind everyone of their responsibility to prepare themselves. We encourage everyone in the community to follow the theme of the National Preparedness Month.


For more information on National Preparedness Month and how to be prepared, visit [www.ready.gov/september](http://www.ready.gov/september).

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

**Honor Flight trips to Washington, D.C. for Veterans**

Sponsored (no cost to Veteran) Honor Flight trips to Washington D.C. to see the memorials to the Wars in which they served. Veterans do not have to have been deployed overseas ... just to have served during the War period. World War II, Korea, and Vietnam veterans are included. Spring and Fall flights. If interested, call Paul at 615-232-4445. Thank you!

**Military Time**  
Space Force Military Branch  
Part 2 of 14  
By: Whitey White



**The Newest Military Branch: The Space Force**

Investments in space capabilities have increased the effectiveness of operations in every other domain. The U.S. military is faster, better connected, more informed, more precise and more lethal because of its ability to harness space effectively.


The same premise — that space is critical — holds true for the average American: Space capabilities are woven into the fabric of daily life. Satellites connect people in every corner of the globe from monitoring weather patterns to carrying television broadcasts. They also provide the positioning, navigation and timing of the GPS constellation that powers global financial networks, enable international commerce, synchronize cell phone networks and optimize

critical infrastructure systems. Access to, and freedom to operate in space, underpins our national security and economic prosperity.

Yet, potential adversaries are seeking ways to deny the U.S. access to the space capabilities that are fundamental to both warfighting and our modern way of life. These adversaries have developed an array of threats — both on Earth and in orbit — that continue to grow in scope, scale and complexity.

The military and civilian Guardians who work for the Space Force protect and defend American interests in space to ensure that our forces, our allies and our people have the ability to harness space whenever and wherever they need it.

**Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse**



**September 12, 2024**  
In memory of  
**John J. Meeks**  
On the anniversary of his death  
By Terry & Ginger Meeks

**September 17, 2024**  
In honor of  
**U.S. Constitution Week**  
By Daughters of the American Revolution

**Bell ringing information at 706-745-5493**