

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Outdoor Burning for Fall

Outdoor burning has been a common occurrence here for generations. Several times a year we provide tips and information on outdoor burning. Fall is usually the time when property owners dispose of leaves and other yard debris in this manner. These fires are usually small and may be in a person's yard or on their private property. These fires do produce smoke and may be concerning to neighbors or persons passing by. Most of these fires are well contained, controlled burns and should not be a concern; however, some do get out and become wildfires.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Property owners are allowed to burn hand-piled leaves and/or yard debris as long as they follow the outdoor burning safety standards as explained by the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC). It is important that everyone understands the elements and dangers of outdoor burning as well as the outdoor burning safety standards.

The outdoor burning safety standards are actions and precautions that property owners must take to provide safety and to prevent out-of-control wildfires. A GFC awareness campaign was launched a few years ago introducing the theme "Take Five" before the burn and to remember the acronym "S-S-T-A-R" representing the five points of the outdoor burning safety standard.

The first "S" represents Space. There must be 25 feet or more between the fire and woodlands. The second "S" also represents Space stating that there must be 50 feet or more between the fire and any structures. The "T" represents Time. Burning can only be conducted from sunrise to sunset. The "A" represents Attendance. A person responsible for the fire must stay onsite with the fire until it is completely extinguished.

The "R" represents Reasonable Precautions. The concept of reasonable precautions is to have tools and measures in place to prevent the fire from escaping. These include things such as a continuous pressurized water source on site; man-made or natural barrier to contain the fire; hand tools or fire-containing equipment on site; weather awareness such as red flag warnings, High Fire Danger designation, and other hazardous conditions such as low relative humidity, high winds, etc.

Just as a reminder, property owners are only allowed to

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Hunger to Know

The reason pawpaws came to mind nine years ago is lost in the frustrating mist of my memory. You may recall the children's song, "Picking up pawpaws, putting 'em in your pocket... way down yonder in the pawpaw patch." Isn't pawpaw an imaginary fruit? I mean, are children's songs a reliable source of facts? (Who from Alabama wears a banjo on his knee?) I thought about pawpaws only long enough to be agnostic on the subject.

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



But my hard agnosticism (I can't and don't care to know) gave way to the genes of my agricultural ancestry. I became curious. So, I commanded my Intel processor to gather electrons throughout the interwebs. I learned about Neal Peterson and his lifelong pawpaw research. He is the pawpaw parson, extolling the reality and virtues of North America's native tropical fruit. I placed my online order for trees.

At that point, I was like the philosophers Paul encountered at the Areopagus (Acts 17). Their monument to an unknown god was their acknowledgement that perhaps there is more to know. I had never seen, much less tasted pawpaw fruit but was open to the possibility. My grafted whips were an acknowledgement that there is more to know.

"We want to know," the erudite thinkers told Paul. He obliged with facts. The Lord of heaven and earth made you. He sets your time and place. He remains close enough for you to seek and find Him. He gave proof by raising Jesus from the dead. You find Him when you repent and believe. That day, some of Paul's hearers did.

Beyond his Mars Hill sermon, Paul references his hunger to know. On repentance: "I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh" (Rom. 7:18). On assurance: "I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). On eternity: "Now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known" (1 Cor. 13:12).

The truth is near. It's in children's songs. "Jesus loves

See Fowler, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

Q. I pay a lot of taxes so I think the county should be able to repair my private road when we have a rainstorm and flooding like we had recently. Why can't you?

A. I can't tell you the number of times we have heard this statement over the past several years, and we really do understand the sentiment. However, state law dictates that unless there are unusual circumstances such as medical or safety issues, the county can not work on private roads. However, if there is a severe problem, let us know - just in case the State or Federal Government will allow us authority and funding for additional work. There is nothing that would make us happier than to be able to go around and instantly repair all the washed-out spots on private roads.

Having said that, if we do everything possible to help and if we simply cannot do more, we will try to advise you on how to have your road repaired and give you a list of contractors to contact. We suggest that you first contact the other property owners and ask them to share in the expense. We can also make a list of adjacent property owners for you if that will help.

Q. Our road ditch seemed to be stopped up with leaves, which also stopped up our culvert. Can't the Road Dept. keep all the county ditches clean?

A. We have over 600 miles of county roads which equates to many more miles of ditches. We try to keep them clean as much as possible, but with the tight budgets of all counties, we also try to keep our employee number down to a minimum. We simply cannot keep all the ditches cleaned all the time. We work on some ditches each year so that over a three-year period we usually can get around to most of them. Often, we find homeowners raking their leaves into the county road ditch. This practice only makes the problem worse. We would ask the public to help out where you can.

Q. We want the county to take over maintenance of our road. What is the process for doing this?

A. After recent heavy rains we had many, many calls and visitors about this issue. Here again, it is not a simple answer. In 1994 the county ordinance was changed and from that date

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

Fun Activities

All of these activities can add zest and gusto to your life. Each one is like an individually wrapped gift under the Christmas tree of life. Each day we have the privilege and opportunity to tear into as many gifts as possible. And the wonder of wonders is that the very next day, the gifts are back under the tree to be unwrapped again and again. You may not personally care for some of the gifts, and that is okay. There are plenty of gifts. Here are just a few:

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



Walking—a journey around your neighborhood; Luncheons—valuable time with friends and family; Hiking—plenty of available trails wherever you live; Browsing the library—nowadays, more than books are available; Doing jigsaw puzzles—a challenge awaits you; Writing—everyone has a story within; Concerts—place you in a different world; Volunteering—communities need your help; Movies—the ones that make you feel good;

See Ashurst, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Letter of Thanks

Dear Editor,

I would like to post a letter of thanks to Mr. Dallas Snyder for stopping and staying with me until first responders arrived after an auto accident on Oct. 12. I appreciate his kindness and willingness to help get in touch with my family, allowing me to use his own phone. He stopped after many vehicles passed us by in all directions. I pray for God's Blessing on him. We could use more caring folks like you. Thank you so much.

Marie Cook

What Do We Want?

Dear Editor,

Look, Trump certainly has his baggage. But do we really want four more years of: 1) Bidenomics/Bidenflation? [Compare the real purchasing power of your personal earnings with your personal needs.] 2) Expansive crime with no consequences? 3) Border chaos and the overwhelming influx of illegal transients? 4) Creeping socialism versus earning and paying one's own way? 5) Disrespect for law enforcement and other people's wellbeing? 6) A lack of common sense? 7) Minority rule, to the exclusion and/or detriment of the majority?

PLEASE let your wellbeing and that of your nation answer the foregoing.

Claude Spears

What Goes Around

Dear Editor,

Across the restaurant from where I was sitting, a father and his son were having breakfast. Their resemblance was unmistakable. The father, if I had to guess, was 40 years old or so, and the son looked to be around 15. I couldn't hear their conversation, but they talked easily and with passion. They smiled a lot, and when the boy laughed, it was infectious, causing me to smile as well.

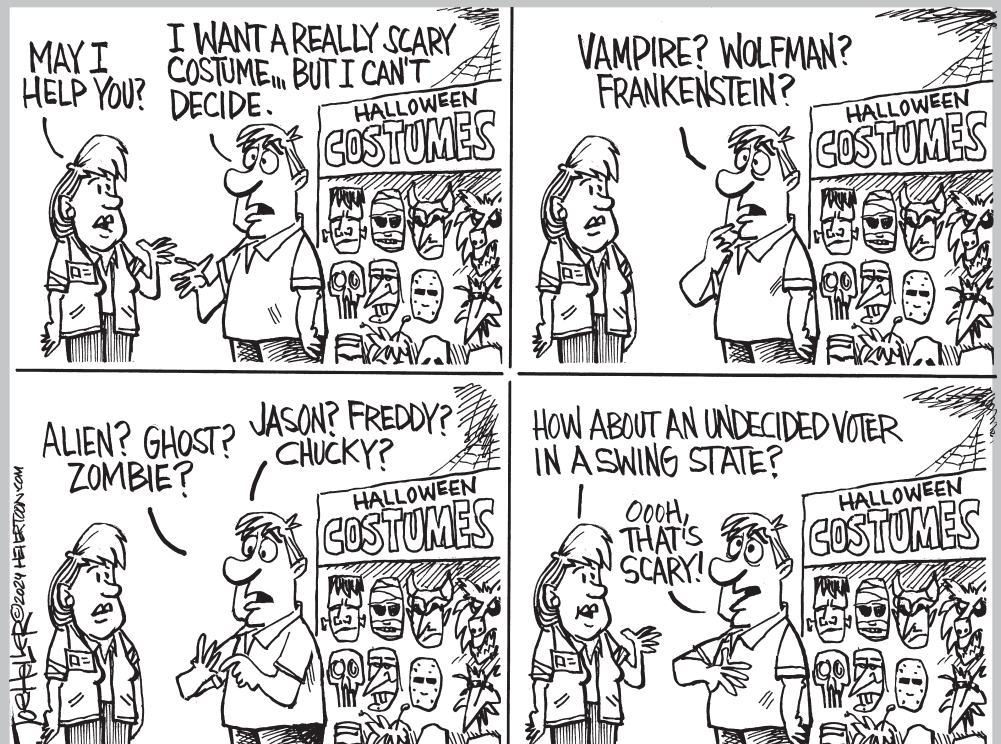
See Vickers, page 5A

Voter Note

Dear Editor,

I am 93 years old, presumed by many of you to have exceeded my time, ability and wits to advise or influence those who function more acutely. Present society pretty much denies the respect as was shown the elderly during my early years of life, so my spirit hurts now more than my body. Thus I have little to lose to wring out my soggy egging ego by expressing those concerns with erosion of the values,

See Hansen, page 5A



No Guns for Illegals

As you well know, Border Czar Kamala Harris intentionally created an illegal invasion at our southern border.

Under her failed policies and disastrous leadership, there have been more than 10 million illegal alien encounters nationwide - with roughly two million known gotaways who evaded Border Patrol. To make matters worse, new data reveals that the Biden-Harris Administration released over 600,000 illegal aliens with criminal histories into the country. Alarming, this includes 13,099 illegals convicted of homicide, 62,231 convicted of assault, and 13,423 convicted of weapon offenses.

United States Congressman Representative Andrew Clyde



These numbers should terrify every American - especially if these dangerous individuals get their hands on firearms.

Currently, 19 states and Washington, D.C. offer driver's licenses to illegal aliens. Additionally, Immigration and Customs Enforcement's controversial Secure Docket Card pilot program is projected to distribute around 10,000 photo ID cards to illegal aliens released into the United States.

So, while Border Czar Kamala Harris has allowed criminal illegal aliens to roam our streets, radical liberals like Minnesota Governor Tim Walz are offering them photo IDs.

Folks, this is a recipe for disaster. That's why I recently introduced the No Guns for Illegal Aliens Act, which would simply prohibit illegal aliens from using government-issued IDs to purchase firearms.

This legislation is just plain common sense!

As we await President Trump's historic mass deportation effort, we must ensure illegal aliens with government-issued IDs cannot obtain firearms and wreak havoc on our communities. Please know that I'm working to protect you and your family from dangerous illegal aliens, which includes preventing these criminals from purchasing guns and defending American citizens' Second Amendment freedoms.

Guest Columns

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

Mr. Newell

Old Man Newell was a little different. Some folks said he was a mite "quare," while others just said he was "turned funny." The bottom line was that he just didn't like young boys for some reason or another. He was always rough talking and short tempered when it came to the boys around Trapptown. No one knows the reason why, but, Old Man Newell just didn't trust any of the local boys.

Around The Farm Mickey Cummings



Paul and Bud Cummings grew up during the late 1940s and early 1950s. They ran with the likes of Tommy Trapp, William Shelnut, Jerry Cohen and Hubert Brooks. These boys grew up and did everything together. They had a code and it was enforced. None of the boys ever told on another one of the boys. You might not agree with what one of the boys was doing, but, you never told on your buddy.

One day during church the boys were all sitting together and Paul (my father) noticed that Tommy Trapp had something in his pockets that was causing them to budge. When asked about the contents of his pockets Tommy pulled out a nail and whispered, "I am getting even with Old Man Newell." After church the gang of boys walked outside to Old Man Newell's log truck. Tommy walked around the front of the log truck and emptied his pockets of the nails. Dad said, "There must've been 2 pounds of roofing nails in front of the wheels of that truck."

He and his younger brother, Bud, felt sorry for Old Man Newell, so, after Tommy and the other boys left, they began trying to kick the nails away from the front of the truck. At this point in time Old Man Newell came up and thought the boys had placed the nails in front of his wheels. The old man had a fit and screamed out, "You boys are trying to give me a flat tire." Papa ran up to the boys and whipped them in front of the whole crowd. Paul and Bud would not tell on their buddies. So, they took the whipping without a word. But, they vowed to take vengeance on Old Man Newell.

Years later Old Man Newell's logging truck broke down and the old man was relegated to driving his little buggy back and forth to town. A plan was soon hatched among the boys. On a Saturday in early June, Paul and Bud Cummings, Tommy Trapp, Jerry Cohen, William Shelnut, and Hubert Brooks went out to Old Man Newell's house and waited for him to go to bed. After he went to sleep, the boys took apart the old man's buggy and re-assembled it on top of the old man's barn. Paul and Bud didn't make it back home until the wee hours of the morning. They

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Chamber of Commerce

I would like to thank Stan Gunter for taking the time to come and speak to our Young Professionals group last week. He gave insights on the voting and election process and stressed the importance of participating in elections by exercising our right to vote. Thank you again, Mr. Gunter, for your commitment to empowering the next generation of leaders! If you are in the age range from 18-45, keep a lookout for our next Young Professionals meeting.

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President Steve Rowe



It's that time of year to kick off with our Tour of Trees throughout December and the Holly Jolly Breakfast with Santa the first Saturday of December. This is the time we transform the Community Center into a magical Christmas wonderland, which is the perfect opportunity to showcase your business to over 1,000 visitors to get your name out there. There is still one sponsor tree available, along with smaller trees and wreaths. Don't miss out on the chance to be a

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Master Gardeners

Today I want to take some time to talk about the Master Gardener Extension Volunteer program and how much they have done for Towns and Union counties since they were created.

Originally, the Master Gardener program was created in Washington state in 1972. There, a local county Extension office identified the need for more help with answering gardening questions from homeowners. The county agent there trained a group of Master Gardeners to help with this problem and the program was born. Over the years the Master Gardener program spread across the United States, arriving in Georgia in 1979. Since then, Master Gardeners have assisted Extension by going through training and then assisting their community through education and projects that make their community a more beautiful place.

UGA extension Watching and Working Jacob Williams



The Towns and Union Master Gardener program started in 2009. That year had seven people complete the training and their volunteer hours. 15 years later four of those Master Gardeners are still active today. Since then, trainings have been held in 2011, 2014, 2016, 2019, 2021, and 2023. There are currently over 60 active Master Gardeners in Towns and Union now.

Since 2013 Towns and Union Master Gardeners have volunteered over 48,000 hours. These hours are valued at over \$1.2 million. In 2023 alone, Master Gardeners volunteered over 4,700 hours valued at over \$141,000. Master Gardeners work on a variety of projects ranging from giving presentations to the public, maintaining public gardens, fundraisers, and operating an Ask a Master Gardener booth at the farmers market. Currently, there are about 30 active projects. All of these projects are focused on making our community a better place to live.

Master Gardeners fill a vital role in the mission of UGA Extension. They extend the outreach that the county Extension office is able to provide. They provide consumer horticulture outreach to the community. Master Gardeners are people who care about the place where they live and want to make it a better and more beautiful place.

2025 is going to be the next Master Gardener training. If you are interested in being joining the program email Jacob.Williams@uga.edu. The training is a 13-week course that meets once a week on Thursdays from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. The training will start at the end of

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North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

Kenneth West Publisher/Owner Shawn Jarrard General Manager/Editor Derek Richards Advertising Director Todd Forrest Sports Editor Lowell Nicholson Photographer

Website: www.nganews.com • Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com • Mail: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

The North Georgia News is an independent and nonpartisan publication. As such, third-party views contained herein are not necessarily the opinions or positions of this newspaper, e.g. advertising, press releases, editorial content, perspectives expressed in articles covering local events, etc.

Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 (Union County) - One Year \$45 INCLUDING UNION COUNTY CUSTOMER REQUEST MAIL SERVICE. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$10. 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. 24, 1988, 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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forward, all roads that were built as county roads had to be paved and follow certain construction guidelines. If you live on a gravel road and the property was developed prior to 1994, there is a possibility the road can be accepted as a gravel road even though it does not meet current standards.

However, the road must have adequate R/W and road surface, slopes not to exceed 15%, and have a minimum of 3 permanent residences. If it is a

newer road, the property owners are required to make improvements to the road to bring it up to county standards prior to acceptance by the county.

The Road Dept. or my office has all the information on what is required and will be glad to offer you advice on getting your problem solved.

You are welcome to call the Road Dept. at 706-439-6062, or the Commissioner's Office at 706-439-6000.

Williams... continued from Page 4A

January and run through mid-April. Those who wish to take the training must go through a background check, reference check, and interview before the training begins. The cost of the course is \$200. The course covers topics like botany, soils, propagation, vegetables, fruits, trees, ornamentals, turf, native plants, and more. After completing the course 50 hours of volunteer work are required to become an active Master Gardener. To remain an active Master Gar-

dener after that, 25 hours are required each year.

If you have questions about the Master Gardener program you can contact me at jacob.williams@uga.edu. The University of Georgia is an equal opportunity, affirmative action, veteran, disability institution. If you need a reasonable accommodation or language access services, reach out using the contact information provided, at least three weeks prior to the program date.

Hansen... continued from Page 4A

principles and ideals that seem obsolete by today's standards. Obviously, I don't worry much about my earthly future, but as a "deplorable," I do ache and even weep for the possible changes of my beloved America that threaten its survival as I knew it. My beautiful great-grandchildren deserve a continued American the Beautiful.

As I attempt to compose this, it is my hope that some of my areas of concern will concern even just a handful of those who may gulp and grit their teeth through this exercise.

We should fear the loss of freedoms. Prominent national figures declare that Trump would end democracy. They issue shrill alarm that his Hitler dictator tactics, self-promoting schemes at the expense of the underprivileged, white supremacy, insurrection would extinguish America's freedoms while these accusers themselves silence citizens' dissent with severe consequences. Valedictory addresses are denied referencing their spiritual influence, but disruptive shouts and physical violence proceed uninterrupted, destruction of national monuments viewed as freedom of expression.

Consider another freedom loss: mandatory COVID immunization for pilots (resulting in serious shortage), military (resulting in serious shortage), school-age children (possibly resulting in future negative physical issues), all freedom to control our own bodies?

We're told that electric vehicles will be mandated within a few years as well as eliminating gas stoves and furnaces and water heaters, etc.

How about government taking over all health care, mandatory gun confiscation, race and gender hiring quotas, rationing or eliminating meat? This is only a partial list of denied freedoms.

Are they in jeopardy through conservative dictate?

It seems difficult to deny connection of economy and immigration, even with education and civil unrest. Certainly, it is evident that vast sums of all facets of our government are currently directed to welfare of the millions who illegally swarm to our shores. Not only do our citizens provide comfortable shelter and food for them while vital necessities are neglected for millions of our own, but also supply medical care, education, transportation and many other essential and nonessential goods and services, offers of free college, government-funded sex change. It is inconceivable to me that there is a strong effort to award voter status to non-citizens. I am not aware that even socialist/communist countries subscribe to this. The scourge of lethal drugs easily transported through our porous borders has not been nearly adequately addressed by this administration but blamed on lack of funds. Could this possibly result from the costly influx of migrants? Recent school leaders order grade promotion to migrant children regardless of performance. Many schools are inadequately staffed to accommodate these students despite lowering standards to bring our own children to levels competitive with many far less developed countries. Are we OK with that, too? Might we address the 300,000-plus unaccounted for/lost immigrant children, quite possibly sold into sex-trafficking? Who allowed them to be brought through our borders?

Our current Vice President of the U.S. blames Congress for not signing a bill into law to provide more border agents. What else was tucked in that bill? Why should we need more border agents if these migrants were not invited/encouraged/supported?

Let us not forget the murders, the rapes, the abuses of our innocents by illegal immigrants (1/2 million convicted criminals and 20,000 Chinese nationals have been absorbed into our nation). Maybe the issue of civil unrest might deserve further consideration. Welcoming all who arrive in our country regardless of criminal status from their place of origin does subject our innocent citizens to evil violence. Let us direct "compassion" to our own people. Consider the promotion of our Vice President to defund the police, encourage destructive and life-threatening "free speech" while silencing verbal dissent by incarceration. Is antisemitism without reproach as allowed on college campuses not "hate speech" rather than "free speech?"

Identity vs merit affects all facets of society: hiring by quota, equal pay regardless of productivity in the workplace, education standards (DEI compliance rather than awarding excellence).

Addressing economic divisions would require a treatise on its own. The present administration spent twice as much as taken in by taxes. Funding Iran's nuclear capability, which threatens to annihilate Israel, should make us shudder with shame to have personally contributed our taxes for this. Many of us oppose forgiving college loans now paid through our taxes, actually against the law imposed by the Supreme Court. As we deny the fundamental needs of our own people to supply comfort to any illegals, our debt increases. Billions of our dollars have been given to Ukraine. Maybe time we whittle back on that. Emphasis on green energy has energized economies of nations such as China, Russia, Venezuela and Mid-East countries who are eager to destroy us while our dependence on their dirty oil weakens America's financial condition as well as its environment. Subsidizing Iran to destroy Israel defies morality. Attention must also focus on the cost of interest on our national debt, which exceeds the cost of our entire military.

These are but a fraction of the issues assaulting our treasury. Further taxing "The Rich" to make them "pay their fair share" is unlikely to lead us out of debt. Alert! We are desperate for practical leaders with sensible solutions for the good of you and me, the common people. Taxing success is unlikely to be the fiscal fix.

Finally, declining family values deserve mention. As the issue of abortion appears to be a top priority consideration for determining America's leadership, please fact-check the assertion that Donald Trump has claimed to ban abortion. This is disinformation. However, Kamala Harris has opposed parental rights such as parents' involvement in their child's sex change.

My word salad may be tedious and hard to chew, but at least it contains some protein.

"Shoot if you must this old gray head, but spare my country's life instead" - Quoted from the poem "Barbara Frietchie" by John Greenleaf Whittier.

Barbara Hansen

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

slipped into their house and beds with the smug satisfaction of finally getting even with Old Man Newell.

Paul and Bud were awakened the next morning by the familiar booming voice of Old Man Newell screaming out the words, "Your boys put my wagon on top of my barn." Papa called his sons into the kitchen for breakfast and asked them about Newell's claims. The boys couldn't lie to their Daddy considering the fact that they had not cleaned the wagon grease from their hands from their escapades of the night before.

The boys confessed their crimes to their Daddy and explained why they had committed them. Their Daddy listened and stated that he understood. However, they were told to go and take the wagon down from the top of the barn. They were also told to go and get the other boys to help the old man.

When the boys drove up, the old man began screaming. He stood at the bottom of the barn and watched to make sure the job was done to his satisfaction. Tommy Trapp asked the other boys, "How are we going to do this?" The old man screamed, "The same way you got it up there." So, Tommy shrugged his shoulders and began taking apart the buggy. He pulled the wheel from the

axle after the hub was removed and said, "Watch this." Tommy let go of the wheel right above Old Man Newell, and it rolled down the sloped roof of the barn. The wheel came within 6 inches of the older man's head. He must've got the message, because he left the boys alone to finish the job and never again screamed at the boys from Trapptown.

Fowler... continued from Page 4A

me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." It's in the Bible. St. Jerome said, "The Scriptures are shallow enough for a babe to come and drink without fear of drowning and deep enough for a theologian to swim in without ever touching the bottom." What's needed is your curiosity. Let him who cannot find light open the shutters.

After nine long years, those Peterson whips produced five pawpaw fruits. That I have tasted and know has disabused me of my agnostic obliviousness.

"O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!" (Psa. 34:8).
www.mountainchristian.net

Vickers...

continued from Page 4A

I assumed they were talking about something special to both of them - sports, fishing, or the like. I wanted to go over and sit with them and enjoy this all too familiar memory once again. Actually, I wanted to roll back the hands of time, not permanently, but just long enough to enjoy one more meal with my son, the way this father was doing. To talk sports, to laugh easily, and to revisit a special relationship that comes and goes all too quickly.

When I left, I walked by their table and strained to hear what they were talking about. I wanted to stop and tell them to enjoy this special time in their lives because it is so fleeting. My son, now 50 years old, lives a long way from me. His son, my grandson, also has an infectious laugh. There's a good chance they're having breakfast, talking easily and laughing often. What goes around, comes around.

Gene Vickers

Ashurst...

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Reading—an escape from reality; Book Club—challenges, friendships, and insights available; and Tasting a fresh apple pie—yum, yum.

Chamber...

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part of this joyful event and make a lasting impression during the holiday season! Contact the Chamber of Commerce for more information.

Dyer...


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burn certain materials. Only hand-piled leaves or naturally occurring yard debris can be burned. Household garbage or other man-made materials cannot be burned.

Anyone who burns hand-piled leaves or yard debris should research the law and outdoor burning safety requirements. For more information about outdoor burning and the five safety precautions, please visit www.gatrees.org.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

**Bell Ringing Union
County Old Courthouse**



October 1, 2024
In memory of
Bill Meeks
on his birthday
by Ginger and Terry Meeks

October 22, 2024
In memory of
John J. Meeks
on his birthday
by Ginger and Terry Meeks

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