

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Recruit Class 106

Union County Fire Department is happy to announce that Recruit Class 106 began this month. UCFD conducts many different types of firefighting classes during the year, but the two main classes are the Support Firefighter class and the Suppression Firefighter class. The Support Firefighter class is the entry-level course that covers the basics of being in the fire department and how to conduct support operations on the fire scene. The Suppression Firefighter class, also known as a Recruit Class, involves learning the techniques of firefighting operations including fire suppression... firefighting.

The recruit class trains firefighters to be able to enter a burning building, rescue victims, and to extinguish the fire. It is very demanding and involves many hours of lecture and skills practice. Firefighters must complete a recruit class and then pass the written and skills exams administered by Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training. Once completed, they will be considered suppression firefighters and may obtain a Georgia Firefighter Certification.

The recruit class involves classroom lectures and skills on subjects such as fire behavior, personal protective equipment, ropes, knots, ladders, survival, medical emergencies, and many more. The skill stations are physically challenging and involve scenarios of potential fire scenes.

Recruit Class 106 began class March 2nd and plans to be completed by May 31st. Classes are a couple nights per week and on Saturdays. The classes include a great deal of reading and studying that recruits must do in their own time. Almost every class involves skills practice. Recruits shall be drilled on the use of their personal protective equipment and how to operate various pieces of fire equipment. Practice is key to skill development, and skills are repeated multiple times.

We are proud of the recruits and their commitment to the service. They are exceptional people who are willing to make sacrifices to do the job. They sacrifice blood, sweat, tears, their sanity, and most important, time. They sacrifice their free time and family time to help someone that they probably have never met.

The recruits are dedicated and are willing to complete the multitude of training to become a firefighter. We are looking forward

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Goat Man

Charles "Ches" McCartney (b.1901) had quite a following in small Georgia towns along the old Dixie Highway. He was a preacher known as the Goat Man. His circuit was along those tree-canopied, two-lane highways adorned by old barns with "See Rock City" fading on their rusty tin roofs.

For decades, beginning in the 1940s, he traveled via homemade wagon pulled by goats. His goatskin apparel and transport apparatus were quite the smelly, noisy spectacle. He camped along the road and in nearby fields. Locals offered him and his critters sustenance along the way. Schools would release the pupils and townsfolk would flock to see the Goat Man passing through again. He sold postcards of himself and his herd to raise pocket money.

It's hard to sort which stories are true, and which are only legends. He may have influenced author Flannery O'Connor. He may have taken his goats on a barge to Cuba. He may have sold a wife once. He may have woken up in a funeral home after being thought dead. What we do know is that losing the family farm in Iowa and having some kind of religious awakening motivated him to escape the monotony of an ordinary life.

McCartney placed signs along the roadway like, "God Is Not Dead," and "Prepare to Meet Thy God." Some characterize his message as "hellfire and brimstone." He was as likely to utter a swear as a prayer. He was coarse, but that attracted curious people. On Sundays he would preach a sermon, sometimes accented by a scrap tire fire belching black, acrid smoke. His lifestyle drew attention to his message.

That's true for you, too. For followers of Jesus, it matters because ultimate truth is at stake. "Keep your behavior excellent," Peter writes, so that as people observe you, they "glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2:12). Paul writes, "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person" (Col. 4:5-6).

Jesus is our model for living like that. His words, deeds, death, and resurrection aligned for one purpose. "For this I have

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. While walking my dog at the Farmers Market (The dog park at the Farmers Market), I heard some people talking about "The Homestead." What is "The Homestead?"

A. The Homestead is a collection of dwellings dating as far back as the early 1800's that represent the heritage of the Appalachian foothills. The Homestead is located adjacent to the Union County Farmers Market at Homestead Lane and Farmers Market Way. About 90% of Appalachian settlers in the 18th and 19th centuries were Scots-Irish (a.k.a. Scotch-Irish) descendants of Ulster Protestants, whose ancestors had migrated to northern Ireland from the Scottish lowlands. They brought with them various trades that were needed as lands continued to be settled. Farming, homemaking, and transportation drove many of the trades and the Homestead dwellings provide good examples of these shops.

Q. What is the Hunter-England Cabin?

A. Located within The Homestead, the Hunter-England Cabin was built in the Choestoe area in 1832 by John Hunter. After John's death in 1848, his daughter, Harriet and her husband, Daniel England lived in the cabin. This is how the cabin got the name Hunter-England Cabin. As was typical of the time, the cabin had wooden shutters over the window openings and a root cellar dug beneath the floor. Over the years, weather boarding was added over the logs and glass windows were installed. The cabin was originally built with poplar logs and is said to be the oldest cabin in Union County. Union County acquired the building and reconstructed the cabin at the Union County Farmers Market approximately 4 years ago. Additionally, Summer visitors will find a heritage garden in front of the Hunter-England Cabin. The garden contains crops of historical significance.

Q. Can you talk about the other old buildings we saw at the farmers market?

A. Also located within The Homestead, the Ocean Tate Blacksmith house dates back to 1890. It contains over 250 antique farm tools and a moonshine still made by master distiller Dillard Canup. The building was donated to Union County by Michael Thompson, Ocean Tate's grandson. A tool shed can also be found

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



National Debt

Despite the fact that the government is raking in the most tax revenue in U.S. history, federal spending is rising even faster and debt is quickly climbing out of control. In other words, the federal government is living well beyond its means. The unfortunate reality of this untenable cycle is that future generations will face higher taxes, towering debt, and less opportunity.

A recent Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report solidifies just how dire the national debt situation really is — sounding the alarm for Washington to swiftly act before it's too late. According to the non-partisan CBO, deficits are expected to average \$2 trillion per year for the next decade. In fact, projections reveal the federal deficit will exceed 5% of U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) every year for the next 30 years. Alarmingly, there have never been more than five successive years of deficits this high.

To make matters worse, our nation is

United States Congressman
Representative Andrew Clyde



Chamber of Commerce

We were blessed to be a part of a dedication Ceremony at The Shirley Miller Lifelong Learning Center hosted by the Chamber and North Georgia Technical College in which Mr. Joe Daniell donated a copy of letter and Hymn from Zell Miller written 40 years ago. Zell and Shirley Miller played a very special part in making North Georgia what it is today. Mrs. Miller was passionate about ensuring that the youth of North Georgia have an opportunity to a quality education. Mrs. Miller shared the history of the Lifelong Learning Center and we learned the important role the Center is playing in local students' lives today. Thank you to Mr. Joe Daniell and Mrs. Shirley Miller for sharing these historic moments.

I would like to thank Jim's Smokin' Que for hosting our Chamber Business After Hours last week. What great food, a good time, and a great networking opportunity with over 100 people in attendance. We also announced the Ambassadors

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

LEO Donation Tax Credit

Dear Editor,
As of July 2022, Georgia law permits citizens to claim tax credits for donations up to \$10,000 per couple (O.C.G.A. 48-7-29.25) to qualified law enforcement agencies. I believe it is called the LESS Crime Tax Credit. However, when I looked on the list of agencies signed up to receive this donation, Union County was not on this list. There were very few, mostly in the Atlanta area.

In light of your front page article last week, it seems this would be a worthwhile endeavor for our local law enforcement to keep down costs, have more funding available and provide a way for residents to support locally and receive a tax credit to boot. The law enforcement agency has to apply through the Department of Revenue website under Qualified Law Enforcement Donation Credit.

Sincerely,
Debora Quigley

Overdosing

Dear Editor,
A lot of folks think it's okay to overdose on medications, alcohol, food, but it is not wise according to God's word. Be careful what you indulge in, for it can be harmful to your health.

Even sports, television, the computer, iPad and cellphones can clamor for our attention in a tech-savvy environment and draw our thinking away from what really is important in this life.

The voice of God is calling sinners to Himself to come and believe upon His Name and be saved. No, there isn't anything wrong with all the technology as long as it doesn't consume you day and night. They can become a god to us.

I do confess that I overdose on God's word, which is healthy to the soul, because it's the only truth of how we are to live in this crazy mixed-up world of sin, and I pray many times for a revival to break out among our young men and women across this nation. I see a glimpse of it happening in our country in different states, and my prayer continues that God's Spirit of truth will pour out His Spirit throughout America like wildfire and many will receive the free gift of salvation that God offers.

The good news of the bible is you can never overdose on it, for it has a way of drawing you like a magnet to steel and will hold you spell-bound in the joy of the Lord forever. When you read God's Holy Word, it is the antidote that can cure a sinful heart and make it new if only you believe in the power of God's healing word.

The bible gives us the wisdom, discernment and knowledge of how to live a good and

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Outdoor Burning Laws

It's that time of year when we are crawling out of fall and winter doldrums with the leaves piled up around the house, and the spring weather makes us want to get outside and clean up the yard, and what better way to get rid of the leaves than to pile them up and light a match and smell the smoke. It looks good and smells good and is a good way to clean up debris with nothing left but ashes.

There are dangers and repercussion for our actions if we don't pay attention to the rules. The financial penalties can be painful not to mention the pain of watching your or your neighbor's house go up in flames. We have preached about always get a permit to burn anything even a small pile of leaves in your yard. This is protection for you in case disaster strikes and the fire escapes and burns things it is not supposed to. It also gives emergency dispatchers information on where legal burns are taking place so they don't dispatch fire trucks unnecessarily to put out your controlled fire.

Now there is a new law on the books in Georgia as of July 1, 2021 that removes the requirement for a permit for small piles of debris, but it puts more responsibility on you to do things to comply with this new law to make the burn safer. If the fire gets out and help is dispatched and you are not in compliance with the law, then fines may be imposed to pay for the suppression costs, such as bulldozers, firefighters, engines, and you don't want to know what a helicopter or air tanker costs! So do what the law requires and you should be covered in case your fire escapes onto your neighbor's property.

You can learn about Georgia's revised outdoor burning regulations and how to "Take Five" before burning; providing an easy five-point "S-S-T-A-R" to visually remember your responsibilities as burners. Go to www.gatrees.org and read the 5 points you need to take to comply. You can also check out this link and see our own Mark Wiles (aka Silver Smokey 2022) explaining all about it. #gatrees #wildfireprevention #takefive #georgialaws #forestry www.youtube.com.

As of July 1, 2021, changes go into effect regarding the legal responsibilities of Georgia landowners burning outdoor yard debris. Under Senate Bill 119, GA code section 12-6-90 was changed to eliminate the need to notify the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) by the person, firm, corporation, or association who intends to burn hand-piled natural vegetation/

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RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



The Deer Hunters

I have rambled around in the Cohutta Mountains for at least 50 years. They are rugged, beautiful, fascinating and yet mysterious. When I was a boy I camped, fished and hunted in places like Jack's River, Conasauga River, Beech Bottoms, the Potato Patch, Rice Camp, Tear Britches, Jiggers Creek, Grassy Mountain, Hemp Top and other wonderful sounding names. I have found traces of old mills, railroad tracks, timber camps and old home sites. And from the top of Hemp Top Mountain you can see a place I have always wanted to walk but never have. Big Frog Mountain is just across the state line in Tennessee. You can see the mountain from Copper Hill, and it is especially beautiful with a fresh snowfall on its 4,000-foot slopes. So, when Milton suggested we hike up Big Frog Mountain I jumped at the opportunity.

Tom Starrett, Milton Bradley, Sheldon Henderson and I met early one morning and drove over toward the Ocoee River and parked close to Thunderstruck Campground. As we began walking along an old logging road, a story I'd heard years ago came to mind. The time period for the following story was the very early 1970s or late '60s not long before the Cohutta Wilderness was created by congressional action. A man went deer hunting in the Cohuttas on a bitterly cold day in November. The wind was blowing hard out of the north, so this fellow decided to just set up his camp instead of hunting.

There were a couple of inches of snow on the ground as he set up his tent. He built his fire and got a pot of venison stew. All of a sudden the fellow caught some movement out of the corner of his eye. He turned his attention toward the movement and saw a man walking toward him. This fellow was dressed in clothing of an earlier time. His homespun wool coat was thin and tattered. His stetson typed hat was stained with sweat. He had black, patched trousers and wore old black brogan boots. The old man was carrying a double-barreled, rabbit-eared shotgun. The two men nodded at each other when the stranger got close.

The hunter asked the old man where he was hunting. The old man motioned to the south with his head and said, "I've a mind to go in towards Hell's Holler." The hunter said well just sit here with me for a spell and have a pot of venison stew. The old man responded, "No, I have no need of food anymore." The

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Raised Beds Soils

Last week I talked about the different materials that can be used to construct a raised bed. This week I want to talk about what we put in the raised beds. There are many different options out there, some are better than others are, and some are cheaper than others are. So let's talk through some options for soil in your raised garden bed.

Before filling up your raised garden bed figure out how many cubic feet of soil you will need. This is a simple calculation of multiplying length by width by height. Let's use the dimensions 8 feet X 4 feet X 10 inches. In this case, we would multiply 8x4x0.833 because 10 inches is 0.833 feet. The answer is 26.66 cubic feet. If we wanted to convert cubic feet to a cubic yard, we would divide our cubic feet by 27. This means that we have close to one cubic yard of volume.

Now that we have the math out of the way and know how much material we need let's talk about what materials can be used. Obviously, you can use top soil to fill the raised bed. If you have extra top soil nearby this might make sense for you. Otherwise, I don't think that it's a great option. Top soil is not regulated in terms of what is in it. So you might have many chunks of bark that haven't started decomposing. If you don't know the source of top soil, it could also contain weed seeds that will grow and compete with your plants.

Another option would be to go to the store and buy bags of soil that are made for raised beds. This would give you quality soil in the beds. The flip side is that you're going to spend a lot of money doing it. You could easily spend \$\$\$ for soil using the dimensions I talked about earlier. If the money is not a problem, this is a quick and easy solution.

Compost is a great way to fill your raised beds. However, beds shouldn't be 100% compost, they need some soil in their too. Compost that has completely composted will provide many nutrients to the soil. If you have your own compost you can use that, or you can buy compost in bulk. Some companies will deliver or if you have a pickup truck, you can use that. You can also buy compost in bags. A product like Black Kow is an example. Buying bags will be more expensive. One drawback to using compost is that the pH will most likely be high. This can lead to some nutrient shortages. Another thing to keep in mind with compost is that it will continue to decompose. This means that the amount you have will decrease and more will need to be added periodically.

The lasagna method is a popular way to

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UGA extension

Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



North Georgia News

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

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Publication No: 001505

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on the property. Inside the tool shed are antique mule plows donated by Kathryn Litton. The plows originally belonged to farmer Brown Litton. He used the plows with a 30-mule team to turn 600 acres of farmland each season. The tobacco barn donated by Newt and David Miller serves as a reminder that in the 1800's, tobacco was an important cash crop, after cotton. Tobacco became a major part of the local rural land-

scape, so much so that they're a symbol of rural Georgia that we don't want to lose.

Q. Can the public go inside the buildings of "The Homestead?"

A. Effort is made to try to have "The Homestead" open on days when the Farmers Market is open. Effort is also made to have someone available at "The Homestead" to provide related information to the public.

Cummings...continued from Page 4A

hunter looked down at his fire to pick up the coffee pot, and when he looked up the man was gone. Completely disappeared. He got up from the fire and took five steps to where the old man had stood, and there were no tracks in the snow.

The hunter stayed in his camp and hunted for a few days without any luck. So, he drove out and stopped at an old general store for a candy bar and cold drink. He ran into an old friend and the two of them started talking about their hunting trips. The first hunter told his friend the story about his encounter with the old man. As he told the story, his friend's face lost its color and he stated that he'd met the same man on that real cold day down at Three Forks. He described the man as wearing the same clothing and everything. He even told the man where his tree stand was located, and the old man told him he'd walked down the ridge where the stand was located and had seen him in the stand earlier in the day. And just like what happened to his friend the fellow had disappeared when he looked down to pick something up, leaving no tracks in the fresh snow.

As we climbed the ridge to Big Frog Mountain the wind picked up and brought the scent of rain to my nose. What had begun as a clear day soon turned cloudy, and yet I knew the rain would not come until later that evening. We climbed through a hardwood cove and soon left the old roadbed and crossed over the top of the cove. There were at least eight large poplars observed along the route. These poplars were at least 200 years old and the largest

was at least 47 inches in diameter. We came out of the top of the cove on hog back ridge that was straight off on either side of the ridge. I have never witnessed as much hog sign as I did that day. The ground was torn up.

We sat down for lunch at a rock outcrop and talked of our day, and the wind became even stronger. I could hear it moaning through the gaps above us and I wondered about the old hunter and if he were still out there. But, Milton called my name telling me to come look at this white oak. About 10-15 feet up the tree there was a hole that young bears had used to crawl into. The trunk had claw marks on it. Just a little farther another white oak had limbs broken out of the top where bears had been feeding on acorns. A little more climbing revealed a place where bears had been feeding on grubs.

The final climb to the top of Big Frog took us through a rhododendron tunnel. The trail made its way about 150 yards underneath a mass of rhododendrons. You could see a hole of sunlight at the other end of the tunnel. I could just imagine what this place would look like when the rhododendrons bloomed in June. Just before the top we found either an old phone line or telegraph line that we followed all the way to the top. We think it went down from the top toward Copper Hill and allowed the big timber companies to communicate with town.

We walked a total of 11.6 miles that day with a change in elevation of some 4,000 feet. We never met the old hunter. But, you could feel his presence.

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

sador and Business of the Quarter for the first quarter of 2023. Congratulations to Ambassador Regena Phillips with Re/Max Town & Country, and Business of the Quarter, River City Bank. Congratulations to both!

If you see Will Harkins be sure to wish him luck as he prepares to go from Nottely to the National Professional Fishing League. We had a huge crowd at his send-off last week at the Community Center. For those who do not know Will, he is a senior at Young Harris College, he also has been on the dean's list and president's list while fishing over 30-40

tournaments a year, putting in volunteer time with events, and completing mission trips. Will's first tournament will be on Lake Pickwick in Alabama, March 15-17. We all wish you much luck and hope you have a great time with this amazing experience!

As the time changes and as we wait for the weather to warm up again, be sure to go to the Chamber calendar on our website at visitblairsvillega.com for all of the upcoming events.

Remember to say a good word to someone and help make life Better in Blairsville!

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expected to face the slowest population growth in American history through 2053, less than 4% per decade — which marks just half the growth of the previous low during the 1930s. Combined with diminished funding, this population growth projection raises serious concerns about support for insolvent programs.

As you likely know, our national debt is only expected to exacerbate. The CBO anticipates that our debt will reach a whopping \$154 trillion by 2053. Of course, this is if the country doesn't experience a financial collapse first. To put this number in perspective, this projection is equivalent to more than \$1 million per American household. Based on the CBO's analysis, this massive debt increase would require an average yearly debt ceiling increase of \$4 trillion.

Folks, this is simply unsustainable.

Year after year, Washington's irresponsible budget-

ing has only worsened our egregious and growing debt. Yet the failed economic policies and runaway spending over the last two years under one-party Democrat rule have significantly intensified the grim economic outlook. In fact, legislation enacted since President Biden took office has increased spending projections by \$6 trillion over the next decade, while executive actions have boosted spending by more than \$1 trillion throughout the same timeframe.

Now more than ever, Congress must fight for fiscal sanity in Washington. We need to be sensible, reasonable, and responsible about our nation's finances in order to get our economy back on track for generations to come. Please know that as a new member of the House Appropriations Committee, I remain committed to reducing senseless spending and practicing fiscal restraint to reduce our ballooning debt and deficits.

Riley... continued from Page 4A

yard debris. Any local burning ordinances are applicable and may be more restrictive than state law. In addition, restrictions on burning in 54 northern Georgia counties under the Environmental Protection Division summer burn ban from May 1-September 30 continue to be in effect. Changes to 12-6-90 include specific requirements of those intending to burn outdoors.

A Georgia Forestry Commission communication campaign is informing landowners of these requirements in various media and is built on an acronym that emphasizes legal burning responsibilities. It advises burners to carefully plan their burn by remembering to "Take Five," and follow an easy to remember; "S-S-T-A-R" formula: S – Space – 25+ feet between fire and woodlands; S - Space 50+ feet between fire and structures; T – Time – sunrise to sunset; A – Attendance – Person responsible on-site until the fire is extinguished; R – Reasonable precautions – Tools/measures in place to prevent escaped fire.

Beginning May 1st and ending September 30th, EPD's Open Burning Ban will be enforced in 54 Georgia counties. The Open Burning Ban prohibits citizens and businesses from burning yard and land-clearing debris. This rule is in addition to the year-round state ban on the burning of household garbage. Open burn rules in Georgia don't restrict you from never making a fire outdoors.

There are several legal ways to burn outdoors; thirteen ways in fact. These are types of legal burn activities as outlined by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division: 1. Reduction of leaves on premises, 2. Agricultural procedures for production or harvesting of crops (if land tract is 5 acres or less), 3. Burning vegetative material for agricultural opera-

tions (if land tract is greater than 5 acres), 4. Prescribed burning, 5. Recreational purposes and cooking, 6. Fire-fighting training, 7. Acquired structure burns, 8. Vegetative debris from storms, 9. Weed abatement, disease, and pest prevention, 10. Open flame devices, 11. Land clearing, construction, and right-of-way maintenance, 12. Disposal of packaging materials for explosives, and 13. Land clearing with an air curtain destructor. And though these are legal ways to burn in Georgia, some of these types of burning require permits or special equipment. Burning manmade materials like tires, plastics, lumber, or household garbage is never legal in the state of Georgia.

For more information on burning in Georgia or if you are in doubt about what you are allowed to burn, contact your local Georgia Forestry Commission office or go to www.gatrees.org or check us out ChestChatt RC&D on Facebook at Chestatee Chatahoochee RC&D.

Fowler... continued from Page 4A

been born." He said, "and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth" (John 18:37). What is truth? "I am the way, the truth, and the life," he said, "no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6). That is the invitation of a lifetime.

The Goat Man's lifestyle gave him a hearing in bygone days. I'm not advocating his goat-themed wanderlust, nor can I vouch for his message. But this I can say: today, your lifestyle is the platform for your life's message, just like the Goat Man.

Dyer... continued from Page 4A

to teaching the knowledge and skills that are required to become a firefighter. We will also be happy to see them in action where they can apply all that they have learned.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Combs... continued from Page 4A

healthy life in Christ. Once you sink your teeth into the bread of life, you are tasting the recipe that can save a sinner by God's grace.

I want to stop and thank the many people who have spoken up on God's behalf by sharing your opinions of how we are to conduct ourselves in a godly manner that pleases God. Sharing the love of Christ never gets old, for His mercies, grace and love are new each morning we awake to a new day that the Lord has made and rejoice in His goodness.

Frank F. Combs

Williams... continued from Page 4A

fill raised beds. You alternate layers of brown and green material. Brown material is dry leaves, shredded newspaper, peat, and pine needles. Green materials are vegetable scraps, garden trimmings, and grass clippings. The green materials contain nitrogen and the brown materials contain carbon. Make the brown layers twice as thick as the green layers and it will compost down into a good material into which you can plant.

If you have beds that are very deep another option is the put branches in the bottom to fill up space. The branches will break down over time, giving you good material in which to grow.

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

Union County Lions Club Trash To Treasure



March 25, 2023 - 8 AM-1 PM
Union County Civic Center
165 Welborn Street
Blairsville, GA 30512

It's time for our next fundraiser. We raise funds to help those in our local community. We have people who sell yard sale items, candles, jewelry, crafts, tools, etc. The cost for a 4x6 space is \$15 each. Setup will be Friday, March 24th from 4 PM-6 PM. You can also set up Saturday from 7 AM-8 AM. If you would like to be a vendor at our next event or have additional questions, please contact Chasity Miller at 706-897-5467 or chasrcs@gmail.com. We hope to see you there.