

Opinions

Everybody has one...

COVID-19

COVID-19 is on everyone's mind and is at the forefront of our daily lives. From an Emergency Management standpoint, we have followed the coronavirus from the very beginning and have been discussing it as far back as the first of January. Although there are plans to deal with these types of situations, we have never faced an actual event on this scale. There is also the fact that each pandemic brings its own unique issues and challenges. COVID-19, being a new, never before seen virus is even more challenging because so little is known about it.

One thing is for certain: there have been many hours put into planning for this event. Over the last couple of weeks, we have had meetings or made contact with almost every organization in the county. We have been gathering information and planning for possible issues and actions to take. We have been in constant contact with Union County Government, attending several meetings or conference calls each day, on weekends and at times going late into the evening.

I can honestly say that I have been on more conference calls in the last two weeks than I have in the last five years. In my 30 years of public safety, I have never seen an incident or event develop at a faster pace. We have been planning feverishly.

We are in the preparation stage of this pandemic. There are several objectives that we are facing. Our first objective is to inform the local people of the situation. We have found this task very difficult due to lack of information, the almost hourly changes of the information, and the fact that we have been extremely busy in numerous planning meetings. We have tried to inform the public on what is happening, what to look for and what to do. We are still recommending the CDC guidelines such as hand-washing, social distancing, avoiding sick people and staying home if sick.

Second, the E911 center, the Fire Department, and other public safety have enacted procedures to respond to emergencies, as well as possible cases of COVID-19. Most of the procedures are to protect you and emergency responders. Emergency responders have very specific protocols to use appropriate personal protective equipment. Keeping emergency personnel healthy and able to respond to emergencies is vital in these situations.

See Fire, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Home Alone

Avoid social gatherings of more than 10 people. Avoid restaurants except for pickup options. Avoid discretionary travel. So says the President's coronavirus guidelines.

Most churches complied, and pushed some of the faithful out of their comfort zones. Whether your church attendance is a lifestyle that you enjoy or a duty according to your religion, the disruption of canceled services can be disconcerting. Pope Francis acknowledged as much when he urged Catholics, "If you cannot find a priest to confess to, speak directly with God, your father, and tell him the truth...ask for pardon with all your heart."

Jesus offers comfort for these strange times. "Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:32-33). We, too, are scattered to our own homes by social distancing concerns or shelter in place demands.

If you find yourself alone while working or schooling from home, avoiding groups of 10 and restaurant dining rooms, or minimizing shopping trips and travel, then realize that you are not alone. Jesus' followers left Him to face his trial alone, and yet he found comfort in the presence of the Father. When you are alone, consider it your opportunity to meditate on the Word of God and pray about what is happening in the world today. The Lord is near, and He invites you into his presence.

What does God offer in these troubling times? Peace. Jesus said that since He has overcome the world, we can have courage and peace. The peace that Jesus describes can only be experienced in times of tribulation. Said another way, when all is calm and bright, it is contentment that you feel. Peace is experienced in contrast with strife, such as when your health is threatened or your job is in jeopardy. Resisting the coronavirus and its effects is the struggle that makes your God-given peace more evident.

Why doesn't God do something about this? Well, He did. God the Son came to earth to "overcome the world," He said.

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. Did Union County adopt a State of Emergency Resolution last week?

A. Yes. I adopted this at 2 PM on Thursday, March 26, 2020, on the steps of the Union County Courthouse. By the time you read this in the North Georgia News, the Resolution will be in full effect.

Q. What exactly does Social Distancing mean?

A. Social Distancing is deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. Staying at least six feet away from other people lessens your chances of contracting COVID-19, as well as other illness like the flu. Social Distancing should also be practiced by limiting you and your family's outings.

Q. Are there other considerations with Social Distancing?

A. Don't go somewhere unless it is necessary and only one member of the family should go do the grocery shopping for example. A big part of social distancing is also not attending any large gatherings of more than ten people. This is why church services, public events, festivals, concerts, and most parks are either cancelled or closed. While Social Distancing can be hard because people enjoy social interaction, it is imperative that everyone limit contact with people who are not immediate members of their household or is required in a working relationship.

Q. Has the USFS closed all the trails including the Appalachian Trail?

A. As of Friday, March 27th, the USFS has shut down trail-head access points, including those on the Appalachian Trail and nearby trails to prevent groups from congregating and to protect public health and safety. Based on the Facebook post made by the U.S. Forest Service this decision was made to align with state and local measures to contain the COVID-19 outbreak.

Q. It looks like to me that being on the Appalachian Trail should not bother anyone as you are out there all alone.

A. The problem is that often people on the Appalachian Trail or other similar trails sometimes become lost, injured or sick. It is up to local Fire and Rescue personnel and EMT's/Ambulance to leave whatever they are doing and spend hours and sometimes

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

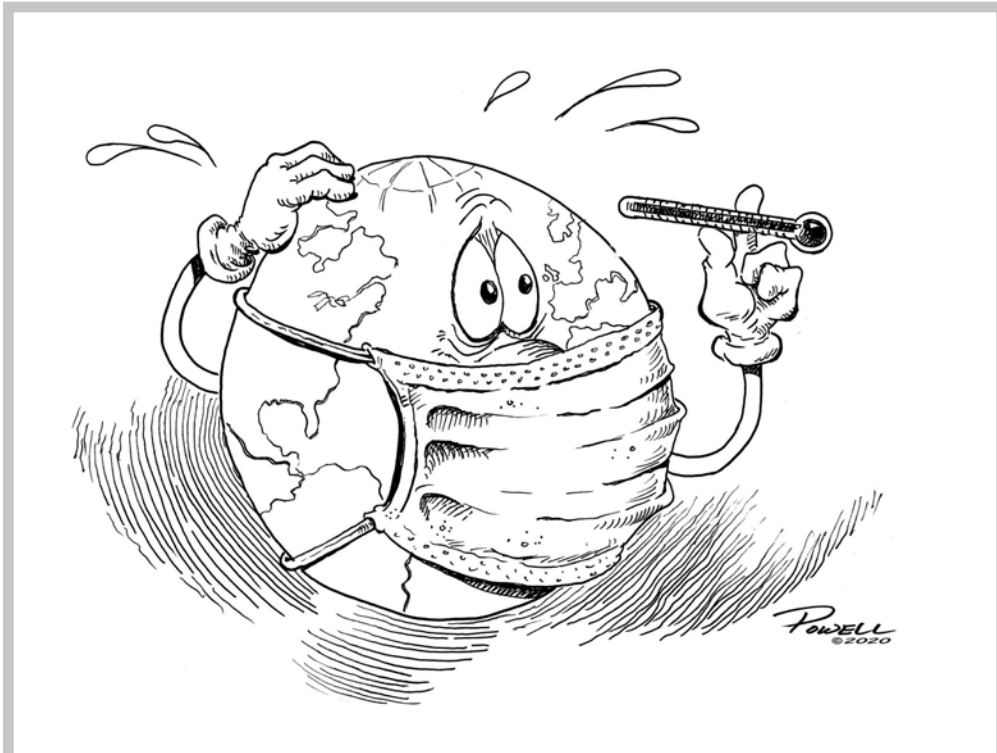
Substance Abuse and High Risk Behaviors

Research shows that the majority of adults who meet the criteria for having a substance use disorder started using substances during their youth. Adolescent substance use is also associated with sexual risk behaviors that put young people at risk for HIV, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and pregnancy. The 2017 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that 29% of high school students are sexually active and 19% of those students admitted to using drugs and / or alcohol before engaging in sexual intercourse.

Substance use and high-risk sexual behaviors have common underlying factors that may predispose the teenage population to these behaviors. The most common traits among teens who engage in high-risk behaviors include lack of positive parental engagement, peers who

See Drug Free, page 5A

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



Chamber of Commerce

Blairsville-Union County Businesses and Restaurants

The spread of COVID-19 and the subsequent closures all around the country present an unprecedented time.

During these days of uncertainty, rest assured that your chamber of commerce is partnering with local, state and federal agencies to ensure we are adhering to all governmental regulations and recommendations to keep our community healthy and operational.

Many local shops and restaurants have had to close their shopping and dining areas to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Fortunately, many of these businesses offer take out and curbside pick-up, preserving a part of their income during these hard times.

Contact your favorite Union County restaurant to see what's on the menu and to place an order. Call local retail shops to find out how you

See Chamber, page 5A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Congratulations to New Superior Court Judge

To the Editor,

The State Bar of Georgia congratulates Tallapoosa Judicial Circuit Senior Assistant District Attorney T. Buckley "Buck" Levins on his appointment by Gov. Brian Kemp to serve as a Superior Court Judge for the Enotah Judicial Circuit, covering Lumpkin, Towns, Union and White counties.

Judge Levins brings 14 years of experience in the legal profession to his new position, including seven years as senior assistant district attorney in the Enotah Circuit before moving to the Tallapoosa Circuit last August. Named as the Georgia Council of Accountability Court Judges' Prosecutor of the Year in 2019, he was engaged in private law practice for the first half of his career.

See Sutton, page 5A

Proud of Our President

Dear Editor,

I am so proud of our president for telling us the truth about coronavirus. He has pointed out how the World Health Organization lies. The WHO said the mortality rate for coronavirus was 3-4 percent. But Trump knew that was fake news. He let us know that the actual mortality rate is less than 1 percent. Also he has pointed out how the CDC also lies. The CDC said they have not determined whether or not coronavirus will go away when the weather gets warmer, like the seasonal flu. Trump has assured us that coronavirus is seasonal and will go away this spring. He is doing a fantastic job. Keep up the good work. I always listen to Trump because the scientists don't know what they are talking about. Trump knows more than they do. Thank you, President Trump.

Sincerely,
Bo Weeks

Trump Ignored Warnings

To the Editor,

United States intelligence reports from January and February 2020 warned the Trump administration of a likely pandemic. But Trump never liked to read his daily intelligence reports and doesn't take them seriously. Intelligence officials gave classified warnings to the Trump administration of a global threat from a coronavirus outbreak. Trump ignored the warnings and did NOTHING to prepare for a pandemic.

The Obama administration had set up a White House pandemic office in order for the U.S. to be prepared in case of outbreaks like Ebola.

See L. Williams, page 5A

The Farm Bill History III

The Farm Bill is the main support documents that the congress passes every 5 years or so to keep our farmers steadily producing.

Direct farm aid over the years has become a small percentage of the overall package and food assistance programs and other political tack-ons now take up the bulk of the funds allocated in the bill. Last week I highlighted three of the Farm Bill Titles, Title III Trade, Title IV Nutrition, and Title V Credit. This week it will be the next 4 titles.

Title VI: Rural Development This title uses many of the same authorities as the credit title, but supports rural business and community programs, including rural electric and telecommunications services, rural water, and sewer infrastructure, rural hospitals and health care, among other programs.

The loan and some small grant programs under this title operate at a relatively low cost and are all funded by annual appropriations. The assistance is justified by the cost of infrastructure per person (sewer lines, power lines, etc.), which is so much higher in rural areas. A prominent example: prior to the Rural Electrification Act (REA) of 1936, commercial providers had no economic incentive to stretch their lines into more sparsely populated areas. Post REA, a network of Rural Electric Cooperatives and later Rural Telephone Coops (under a 1949 Act), have brought lines to virtually all rural areas. This in turn has facilitated other types of development and investment.

Title VII: Research and Extension This title is among the oldest and most far reaching in the modern Farm Bill, emanating from the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862. The original purpose was to establish and fund research in land grant institutions in every state. Today, these are among our most prominent research institutions, including MIT, Cornell, Cal Berkeley, Ohio State, and Texas A&M to name a few. The mission of the land-grant universities was expanded by the Hatch Act of 1887, which provided federal funds to states to establish a series of agricultural experiment stations under the direction of each state's land-grant college. In 1890, a second Morrill Act provided cash grants for historically black colleges and universities.

The outreach mission was further expanded by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 to include cooperative extension — the sending of agents to spread the results of agricultural research to the farmers. Beyond the original land grants, each college receives annual federal appropriations for

See Riley, page 5A

RC&D Executive Director
Frank Riley



Troubling Times

The Pace Family had settled in the 1600s in Virginia close to Jamestown. They had worked hard and created for themselves a farm called Pace's Pines in the rich bottomlands along the James River. The farm was about 10-15 years old and had begun to provide bountiful harvests each year, and the family was doing well. They befriended a young Native American boy which had lost some of his family, and he had come to live with them. The family and the young lad were very close, and after a period of time, they learned from him that the Indians were planning on attacking the settlements.

The family spread the word up and down the river that there was to be an attack on their farms. Many of the settlers were able to seek refuge in the established fort on the James River. The ones which heard of the impending attack were saved by the actions of this boy and the Pace Family. Many of the ones which did not hear or refused to leave their homes were killed in the attacks. Fortunately for my family, our ancestors lived through the attacks. I am a descendent of this Pace Family, and I am thankful to this young man for warning them about the attacks along the James River.

Another ancestor of mine was a fellow by the name of Jacob Cromer. His father had come from Germany 20 years prior to the Revolution and settled in a place called Newberry, South Carolina. As you know, South Carolina was a hotbed of colonial anger toward England prior to the Revolution. Jacob and many other South Carolinians resented the King's interference in their daily lives. Therefore, he volunteered to serve in the Continental Army. He served as a 1st Lieutenant under George Washington and spent his first winter in the Army at a place called Valley Forge.

We've been told that winter was a very severe time. Many soldiers didn't have shoes and there was little to eat. They all suffered from the cold due to a lack of warm clothing. Many of the soldiers wrapped clothing around their feet to help protect against the cold. I cannot imagine the pain and discomfort those Continental soldiers endured that winter. Frozen feet and little food other than the hard tack, flour infested with meal worms, and molded meat. But, they endured, and fortunately for me, this ancestor lived through this trying time. Not only did he and many of his comrades endure the hard times, but, they actually defeated the greatest military in the world to create a country for you and I.

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Soil Test Report

In the past, I've talked about the importance of soil testing and how to take a soil test. If you have questions about how to take a soil test, I've posted videos on the Towns County Extension and Union County Extension Facebook pages in the past that you can go check out. Today I'm going to talk about how to interpret the report that you get back. The soil test report can be confusing if you're not familiar with nutrient and pH requirements for plants.

Once the lab has processed your soil test, you'll receive your soil report by email or mail. At the top, you'll see your information — name, address, and email. Right beneath that is a line that says sample. If you are submitting more than one soil test you can give each sample a name so that you can keep them straight. If you're only submitting one sample we'll usually just call it "1" or your last name. Right underneath Sample is the heading Crop. When you bring in your soil sample, we'll ask you what you plan to grow, or already have growing in that spot. That way when you get your report you'll have results that are specific to your soil and specific to whatever it is that you're trying to grow. Different plants have different nutrient requirements, so you will have customized results for your situation. We have many different crops that we can run a soil test for, so most likely we can find a crop that applies to your situation. You can put up to five different crops in a single soil sample.

Below the client information, you'll see the results. The basic soil test gives results for phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, zinc, and pH in a bar graph. You'll see a line going through the bar graph, where the nutrients are. If the bar graph column goes above the line then you have enough of the nutrient. If it's below then you need to add that nutrient to the soil. The amount of the nutrient present is reported in pounds per acre. pH is reported a little bit differently, because it's measured on the pH scale. You will still see if your pH is below the desired line.

Now below the Results graphs are the Recommendations. The recommendations are specific to your soil and the crop that you're growing. If you need limestone to raise the pH, the amount needed will be included. Below the limestone recommendation is the pH recommendation. This is going to be a range. Next, come the fertilizer recommendations. The fertilizer recommendations will satisfy deficiencies in your soil. The fertilizer recommendations also include timings so that you know when to apply the fer-

See J. Williams, page 5A

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

Kenneth West
Publisher/Owner

Shawn Jarrard
Editor

Derek Richards
Advertising Director

Todd Forrest
Sports Editor

Mark Smith
Staff Writer

Website: www.nganews.com

Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com

Mailing: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514

Lowell Nicholson
Photographer

Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - One Year \$40. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 10, 1981, 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.

Phone: 706-745-6343 Fax: 706-745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514