

Opinions

An American Tradition

As We the People gather this week to celebrate the 243rd anniversary of our great nation's Declaration of Independence, I'd like to reflect on the exceptional beginnings of the American Project.

No other nation guarantees the same level of freedom that we enjoy, and we owe it all to the enterprising spirits of our Founding Fathers and those who fought to establish our American way of life.

It's true that we live in the freest nation in history, but that's not something we can take for granted, and it didn't happen overnight.

From the "shot heard round the world" in 1775 to the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the American War of Independence lasted eight years and claimed thousands of patriots' lives.

Victory resulted in the beginning of the United States of America, which was incorporated in a document of unparalleled freedom, the U.S. Constitution, upheld to this day by our brave men and women of the military.

When it comes to the time of the American Revolution and the founding of this great nation, however, the vital role of newspapers is often overlooked.

As the editor of a community newspaper founded right here in Union County 110 years ago, I would like to highlight the importance of local newspapers, both historically and today.

Newspapers are an American tradition. In the leadup to the Revolutionary War, the 13 American Colonies relied heavily on newspapers to inform their citizens of the latest injustices being carried out by the Crown.

Still, by the time open hostilities got underway in 1775, many colonists desired reconciliation with the British, and it was American newspapers that helped spread the word and rally the Colonies to the common cause of freedom.

Today, newspapers – especially local newspapers – continue to deliver vital information to residents, such as the use of locally-raised taxpayer dollars, the activities of elected officials, the efforts of first responders, and the happenings of events in our communities.

Just as we can't take our freedoms for granted, we also can't take our community newspapers for granted.

Take a moment to imagine an America without community

See Jarrard, page 5A

The Way I See It

Shaun Jarrard



Of Men and Angels

James Madison lived to the advanced age of 85 and helped birth our nation. He became known as the "Father of the Constitution," which was adopted when he was a young 36. He led the drafting of the Bill of Rights, and served as our fourth President.

To promote the adoption of the Constitution, Madison wrote a series of articles published as *The Federalist Papers*. In No. 51, while explaining the need for checks and balances in government, he makes a key observation. "But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary." This reflects the Biblical view of the fallen human condition which makes government necessary.

It is worth noting that the Founders never believed that a constitution and laws are enough to make government successful. Madison wrote, "Is there no virtue among us? If there be not, we are in a wretched situation. No theoretical checks – no form of government can render us secure. To suppose that any form of government can secure liberty or happiness without virtue in the people is a chimerical (illusory) idea." George Washington said, "The foundations of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality." Another Founder, John Witherspoon, was a Presbyterian minister and president of Princeton. He warned, "A good form of government may hold the rotten materials together for some time, but beyond a certain pitch, even the best constitution will be ineffectual, and slavery will ensue."

What does this mean for today? Well, men are still not angels, and current events (and politics) reek of rotten materials. Many reject God as the source of virtue (morality), which reduces it to simply choices. Or, if it's legal it's moral, which is entirely backwards to Madison's thinking. What a contrast with what French diplomat Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in 1838! "Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. The road I live on has several potholes, what can I do about getting it repaved?

A. I understand that potholes are aggravating but it is not always feasible to repave just because of potholes. What we would like for you to do is call the Road Department at 706-439-6062 and report your problem. They will in turn come out and look at your road and if they can repair the potholes they will, if not they will get your road on a list for further maintenance.

Q. I live on a County Maintained road that has really suffered because of all this rain. It needs some attention, so what do I do?

A. The rain has certainly made the mountains beautiful but it has caused a lot of additional stresses on our roads. Please call the Road Department at 706-439-6062 to report your problem. They will come out and look at your road to see what type of work needs to be done and then write up a work order. Please keep in mind that because of the extremely rainy weather we have been experiencing, the Road Department is behind but will get to your road or request as quickly as possible.

Q. I live on a road with 6 homes, and I would like for you to accept my road into the county maintained road system. What can I do?

A. Well this question has a lot of extenuating circumstances for answers. One thing to always consider first is, everyone on your road has to be in agreement about the county taking over your road, and this is not always the situation. One or two neighbors may be in agreement but not everyone living on the road has the same opinion. So, this has to be resolved. Another item to consider is the condition of your road currently. Is your road wide enough, and are the ditch lines clean, sloped and grassed? What is the condition and size of culverts and what is the current paving condition? Sometimes a private road may also require financial contributions by property owners. Before a road is considered these are questions that have to be answered. While we do not want to discourage anyone from asking about this, we want you to understand there are standards and practices in place that we follow. So, it takes time for us to reach a determination on whether to

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Independence Day Safety

It seems as if summer is flying by and Independence Day is here again. People will be enjoying all sorts of outdoor activities such as going to the lake, traveling, being with family and watching fireworks. All these activities are fun, but some can be dangerous.

Union County Fire Department would like for everyone to keep several things in mind when enjoying the festivities this year.

Although fireworks can be used anytime during the year, fireworks are used more on the Fourth of July. People will be going to the numerous fireworks shows or they may purchase and enjoy their own show. Safety is always first. Fireworks are fun and exciting, but they can also be very dangerous. The last thing that we want is to spend our holiday weekend in the emergency room or worse, in a burn center. People need to respect the hazards that fireworks can present.

Here are a few tips when using fireworks. Never allow young children to handle fireworks and older children should only use fireworks under close adult supervision. Use fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from flammable materials. Light one device at a time and maintain a safe distance after lighting. Never hold fireworks in your hand and please do not make your own fireworks. Please keep these tips in mind. They can help ensure that you and your family have a safe and enjoyable show.

There are also the dangers of driving during this time of year. Pay attention to other drivers. There may be a lot of people who are from out of town that are unaware of our area which may cause delays. Give yourself extra time on your travels due to the increase in traffic. Always wear seat belts and ensure that children are in car seats.

The lake will also be crowded. If you are a first-time boat operator or do not have that much experience with a boat, learn the rules and get familiar with the boat you are operating before getting on the lake. Watch out for other boaters, watercraft, or swimmers. Other things to keep in mind is to know your boat limitations, life jackets should be worn, and watch your speed.

These are just a few things to keep in mind during the holiday weekend. Union County Fire Department wants everyone to have a safe and enjoyable holiday. Have a great Independence Day.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Letters to the Editor

A Great Job

Dear Editor,

I want to express my appreciation of the numerous city and county employees of the city of Blairsville and of Union County. What a great job they do!

At various times, I have called the Road Department to fix holes along Old Smokey Road and the adjacent streets as well as clear off debris after storms. They have been quick in their response and diligent in their repairs/cleanup.

Recently, we had a water issue, and after calling the Water Treatment Department, staff was out within minutes to address the issue.

I want to particularly thank Joe Edwards and Tommy Tanner from the Road Department, and Danny Dillard and Otis Franklin from the Water Treatment Department. But I would be remiss if I didn't mention all the employees I have spoken with and who have been extremely helpful throughout the year, ranging from Blairsville City Hall to all the various departments housed within the Union County Courthouse, from the tax assessor's office and the election office to the probate court and so on.

It is a real blessing to live here in this county with such great people. Thank you all.
Randy Mazie

Growing Consensus For Action On Climate Change

Dear Editor,

There is now growing momentum across party lines that it is time to take action on climate change. New polling from the firm Luntz Global, led by Republican consultant Frank Luntz, revealed the below takeaway points:

A Carbon Dividends Plan has majority support across party lines, including 4-1 support overall, 2-1 support from GOP voters, and 75% support from Republicans under 40.

Some 69% of GOP voters are worried that their party's stance on climate change is hurting them with young voters.

Fully 4 out of 5 voters want Congress to put politics aside and reach a bipartisan solution.

U.S. Rep. Rob Woodall, GA-07, and U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis, of North Carolina, have both come out with strong statements about the need to combat climate change in ways that will not hurt the economy. Fortunately, we have a bill in Congress that will do just that. HR 763, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Bill, will decrease greenhouse gases by 90% by 2050 as well as add millions of new jobs and not cost our government any money. It is time to come together, as Americans, and take action to protect our earth for future generations.
Vernon Dixon, MD

100 Miles in Maine

Ten years ago, three old friends were having a friendly discussion about things we enjoy doing. The conversation soon migrated to the subject of hiking. All of us had some experience on various trails in our lifetimes, and all of us had been hiking many times, but backpacking was something of which we had little experience. One of the friends suggested we take up section hiking the Appalachian Trail. The beginning of our odyssey found us trekking from Springer Mountain to Neel's Gap. All three of us were employees of Cooperative Extension from three separate states all from the Southeast. During our first hike, a tropical depression dropped 7.5 inches of rain on us, and almost every moment of the hike was inundated with thunder, lightning, wind and rain. But we finished the trip and soon began making plans for the next hike.

Another friend and County Agent from Michigan heard of our plans and expressed an interest in going with us. So, the next spring we were on the trail again, and collectively, we now call ourselves Three Men and A Yankee. Stan Moore soon earned the trail name "Sunshine" due to the fact that when he began trekking with us, we experienced more sunshine than rain. Fred Miller from North Carolina is our logistics guy. Henry Dorough from Alabama is good at giving pep talks, and I enjoy telling stories.

We have been hiking together now for nine years, and our hikes have led us to the middle part of Virginia. A few years ago, we met another section hiker on the trail. He had just completed his last section of the trail, and of course we had plenty of questions. I remember asking him about the most difficult section of the Appalachian Trail, and he really did not give me a direct answer. He simply said, "At your age, you all should consider going to Maine to hike the most difficult sections of the trail first." And with that, he turned and walked off into the North Carolina wilderness. For the rest of the day, I kept wondering to myself, "Do I really look that old?"

During the next year or two, we would discuss going to Maine, but other things kept interfering. As we approached Roanoke, Virginia, we began to feel like we had good trail legs under us and that we could do any portion of the trail. We had breezed through the Smokies and the Grayson Highlands. We had marched across the Dragon's Tooth, McAfee Knob and Tinker Cliffs. We were averaging as much as 17 miles on the trail in Virginia. It was decided that now was as good a time as any, so we made our plans for Maine. The four of us were highly optimistic,
See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Leyland Cypress

Leyland cypress trees are a very common and popular landscaping plant. I've seen them planted by people all over Georgia. However, there are a couple of issues that are commonly seen in Leyland cypress trees. Let's talk about Leyland cypress trees, what some of those issues are, and what steps you can take to reduce the chances of your Leyland cypresses getting diseased.

Leyland cypress was bred in 1888. It is a cross of Alaska cedar and Monterey cypress. They can grow to be over 40 feet tall. When they are young, they grow very rapidly. They'll grow at a rate of 3-4 feet per year. Later on in life, they will continue to grow very rapidly at rate of about 2 feet per year. They typically have a Christmas tree shape. In some places, people have even begun to grow them to be sold for Christmas trees. Typically, people plant them for a barrier or privacy screen.

Leyland cypress trees are relatively pest-free. They don't have too many issues with insects or too many different diseases. However, because they have a shallow root system, they are often planted close together, and are commonly planted in poorly drained soils. They are commonly prone to a couple of canker diseases.

The two canker diseases that Leyland cypress trees get are Seiridium and Botryosphaeria canker. Seiridium canker is the most common and destructive of the two in Georgia. The symptoms from both diseases look very similar. You will see individual branches begin to die off. Sometimes you'll see resin in spots on the branches because of the cankers. These cankers are essentially suffocating the branch, leading to the branch turning brown.

Stressed trees are going to be more susceptible to cankers. During times of drought, trees that are already infected will spread the disease much more quickly. Ice damage and spring freezes can create wounds where infection is able to occur. Trees that are near buildings that reflect sunlight will also be more stressed.

Unfortunately, with canker diseases there is not a fungicide that can be used to eliminate the pathogen. Even if there was, spraying a 40-foot tall tree is not practical. Once a tree has been infected the best treatment is to remove the dead branch and dispose of the branch. Try to keep plants from becoming stressed by laying mulch around their base. This will increase the moisture retained by the soil, and suppress competitive weed growth. During dry, hot summer days, water the trees if the soil has become dry. If trees are extensively damaged by cankers, then

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Watching and Working

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