

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Hiking Safety

Fall is here and the leaves are turning. There will be a host of people in our area looking at leaves and trying to enjoy the fall season. One of the many things that people do during this time of the year is go hiking. They enjoy the scenery and the views from our multiple trails here in North Georgia. Unfortunately, these enjoyable moments can turn to difficult times when hikers become lost or injured on the trails. Union County Emergency Management would like to provide some tips for hiking and how to prevent these issues.

Hiking can be great exercise, but hikers should know their limits. There are a multitude of different trails throughout Union County each with different physical requirements. For the person who wants to enjoy nature without a long, strenuous hike in the mountains, there are several great trails at the various county and state parks. For the more adventurous, there is the Appalachian Trail and its various access trails. These trails can be physically challenging to the less experienced and less conditioned hiker.

No matter which trail you choose, you must always know what you're getting into. Hikers should research the trail and map it out before they start. They should know the distance, the start and finish, the terrain, the difficulty of the trail and their hiking pace. A hike from Byron Herbert Reece access to Blood Mountain, for example, is a two mile mountain hike. The average mountain hiker walks one mile per hour. A hike to Blood Mountain would be considered a four hour hike. Make sure you have plenty of time for your hike. It is also a good idea to know the weather.

Hikers should also be prepared. Hikers should wear the appropriate clothing and footwear. It is also a good idea to dress in layers as well as have extra clothes. Hikers should carry essential equipment such as water, snacks, map, flashlight with extra batteries, first aid kit, whistle, and something to start a fire. If you take a cell phone, ensure that it is charged. Cell phones can be unreliable. There are many places where there is no service on the mountain trails. Hikers should not depend on cell phones for flashlights, maps, nor GPS.

Hiking can be a great outdoor adventure. We would like for everyone to be prepared and to be safe while hiking. These are just

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



### Judgment Light

I'm an Auburn man, so I have to be an Auburn fan, win or lose. But I have to admit, the way our football team won over Arkansas this year was a gift from the referees. Our quarterback tried to down the ball, but it should have been judged a fumble. Auburn retained possession and kicked the winning field goal. Lights out. It's done. After the game, the SEC admitted the officiating error.

It can't feel good, being on the dark end of judgment. Take the Supreme Court vacancy. You couldn't pay me enough to sit before the Senate to be considered for that job, especially given the politics of the moment. You know going in that whichever party nominates you the other will judge everything you ever said or wrote, and the media will dig for (or invent) scandals. The judge is being judged.

You face all kinds of judgments if you think about it. How did your annual performance review turn out this year on your job? Is your customer happy with the work you did or the product you sold? The IRS judges how you completed your tax return. The highway patrol judges if you obey traffic laws. Anytime you care what people think about what you said, or how you look, you are expecting a judgment.

"As God is my judge," say people swearing to tell the truth. And He is. Daniel, the name of a historic Hebrew hero means just that. The Bible tells us, "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (Heb. 9:27), and "We will all stand before the judgment seat of God" (Rom. 14:10). The referee, the Senate, or the customer might judge wrongly, but does God?

For all the dark, foggy gloom, you will find blue skies and bright sunlight in the words of Jesus. He said He didn't come to judge because that has already happened. God already knows that "men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil." He said, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world." Simply put, everyone has the opportunity to step out of the darkness and into the Light. And then this amazing grace emerges: "He who believes in Him is not judged" (John 3:16-19). Just to make sure nobody misses the point Jesus later said, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not

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**All Things New**  
*Wayne Fowler*



### Commissioner's Questions

I know some of these questions are regarding events that are in the future, but these questions seem to be on the top of many people's minds. Events and upcoming holidays are very important to all of us, and I want the public to have all the information that is available currently so they can make plans.

**Q. What is going to be done about Halloween on the Square this year?**

A. We reached out to Darren Harper with Visit Downtown Blairsville (Downtown Development Authority), who has been trying very hard to organize this event. Unfortunately, there will be no Halloween on the Square or at the Farmers Market.

This year has been a very stressful economic year for all local businesses who would normally participate in this event and give out candy. There are also still concerns regarding COVID-19 and the safety of people gathering and coming into contact with people you would not normally have contact with. Visit Downtown Blairsville and the City of Blairsville have decided that the safest thing for everyone is just to not have the event and wait until next Halloween.

**Q. Is there anyplace to take my kids Trick or Treating this year?**

A. Quite a few businesses, subdivisions, and some churches have been working hard to give kids options for Trick or Treating this year. The Chamber of Commerce has a list of the places they are aware of on their Facebook Page or you can call them at 706-745-5789.

**Q. Since Halloween on the Square is cancelled, what about the Christmas Parade and all the Christmas activities that are normally held downtown?**

A. Christmas activities on the square have always been a joint effort between the Historical Society, the City of Blairsville, and Visit Downtown Blairsville. It was decided that the best thing to do this year was to cancel all Christmas events that would normally be held downtown. Those making this decision know that requirements and recommendations related to COVID-19 might change by December, but planning would have to start now for the events to take place. So, the decision had to be made now

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**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**  
*Lamar Paris*



### Letters to the Editor

#### A Nonpartisan Request

Dear Editor,

I encourage as many people as possible to join the Lake Nottely Improvement Association, which has been extremely instrumental in protecting the lake and changing the dumping of leachate into the creeks and lake.

The association is beneficial to everyone who uses the lake for various activities like swimming, fishing, boating or anything else. The association monitors water quality, advocates for clean and healthy water, a clean shoreline and a beautiful lake to enjoy by all.

LNIA conducts cleanups twice a year, spring and fall, to try and maintain some of the shoreline. This is done all by volunteers.

Association membership is only \$15 a year, which makes for an inexpensive way to advocate for a clean and healthy lake and shoreline. Please consider becoming a member, as it is a benefit to everyone and a small price for the benefits of health, recreation, and last but not least, your home values and health and safety.

Richard Fasanelli

#### Response to "Our Freedom in Danger"

Dear Editor,

In response to "Our Freedom in Danger" from Oct. 14, 2020: what!? "The work of the great Deceiver"?! Quoting Biblical verses?!

How can ANYONE who supports Trump (the great deceiver) consider themselves a Christian?!

P.S. "In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them..."

Thomas D. Wallace,  
U.S. Air Force, MSgt Ret.

#### "When and if we feel there is a serious problem..."

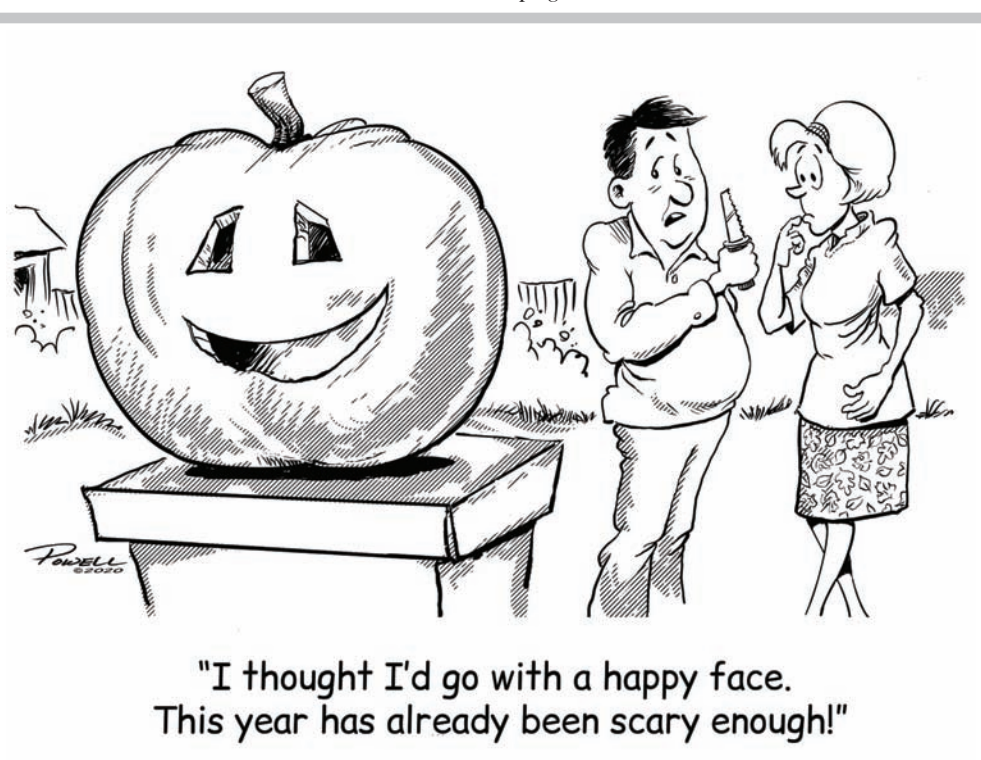
Dear Editor,

Lately I have been reminiscing about my childhood growing up in a small New England town, and given the times we are facing today, one memory in particular stood out. Does anyone remember candy cigarettes? If so, you will probably remember that on cold fall and winter days we would go to the General Store and cash in soda bottles we found on the side of the road for candy cigarettes, then rush outside and pretend we were smoking. This is frowned on today, and rightly so. But, back to my point, the cold air would make our breath visible, which would look like we were exhaling smoke from our candy cigarettes. "This scientific process is called condensation, when the water vapor in your breath condenses into lots of tiny droplets of liquid water and ice (solid water) that you can see in the air as a cloud, similar to fog." And that is what brings me to today... and COVID-19.

Those who do not wear a mask in public or inside stores that have mask mandates in place are creating the same vapor clouds as we all see when we breathe on cold mornings and which spreads out into the air. Exactly like the vapor cloud that one sees spread out into the air when we sneeze or cough. Thousands of tiny vapor droplets floating through the air, only now those tiny little droplets have the potential to infect others with a very contagious and deadly (for some) virus. Wearing a mask will inhibit those vapor droplets from going out into the air unchecked. Wearing a mask is not to protect yourself from your own vapor droplets. It is to protect others.

When I wear a mask I protect you. When you wear a mask you protect me. If everyone wore a mask inside and especially where mask mandates are currently in place i.e. Ingles, Walmart, Home Depot, Tractor Supply, Walgreens, restaurants -- you get the gist -- then there's a darn good chance everyone would be protected from each other's vapor droplets and the residents of our community may start to see our rising numbers of positive cases and deaths decline. We need to consider everyone as being COVID-19 positive

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### Letters to the Editor

#### Why Bother to Vote?

Dear Editor,

"Politics ought to be the part-time profession of every citizen who would protect the rights and privileges of free people" — President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Early voting has already started throughout the state. We have been given an opportunity to play a part in selecting candidates for offices ranging all the way from the White House to the Courthouse in Union County.

I would like to remind everyone of some critical reasons why we should exercise our right to participate in the voting process. Thousands of lives were lost to gain that right when our country began. More lives have been lost since that time to protect it. In countries around the world people are now fighting and dying just to gain the "simple" right to have their voices heard in making laws that govern them.

If you don't vote, all of these efforts will have been in vain, and it could lead to the end of the freedoms you presently enjoy, like reading this article, driving your car, expressing your opinion, freely worshipping, and pursuing the direction for your life that you think best.

As you make your choices among the candidates that are on the ballot, vote for those you believe will make a difference for the betterment of our nation, state and community.

Does the candidate hold to Biblical standards in private and public life?

Has the candidate demonstrated honesty and capability in governing?

Does he or she represent the ideals, values and lifestyle you and your children want to follow?

In America, there are two principal political parties. Each party has a public statement of its platform that provides guidance on how their candidates will govern if elected to office. Please investigate a party's platform on major issues before you cast your ballot.

Following are comparisons of a few of the planks in the platforms adopted by those parties:

Conservative Platform: against abortion; support Christianity; support small government; support lower taxes; support law and order; support traditional marriage; support right to bear arms.

Liberal Platform: support abortion; support atheism; support big government; support higher taxes; support anarchism; support same sex marriage; anti-police and ICE.

Read the complete platform of each party. There are other issues you need to know about to determine how a candidate stands.

Be sure to vote... and while you're at it, take along a friend!

Billy J. Turnage

### Willie the Billy

My Granny, Glenna Mae Cummings, was quite the horse trader. She didn't trade horses, but, she traded other things. She was good at trading with the local peddler for things needed around the home. Granny carefully managed the hen house so there was always plenty of eggs with which to barter for popsicles for her sons. Granny also traded her time. She had a select group of friends she trusted, and Granny would trade her time in helping them in their cotton fields, which resulted in the ladies coming to her house to help in Papa's cotton. But, Granny was especially good at trading for food animals.

Granny could just look at a shoat — a young feeder pig — and decide if it would yield adequate meat and lard when it was finished out at 260 pounds. She had an uncanny sixth sense that would tell her if a hog would get sick or remain healthy. She could tell by looking at a heifer whether that female would give adequate milk for her family. She could also tell if the animal would turn out to be mean or cantankerous. Granny was fond of farm animals, and she never got beat in a trade. If she had been born in today's world, she probably would have majored in Animal Science and maybe even practiced Veterinary Medicine.

Granny and Papa were still living at the weaning-off house next to Lon Cummings when they purchased the farm I grew to love as a little boy. Each day the young family would make the trip to the newly acquired property. Clearing the property of trees was a sun-up to sun-down workload, and the young boys tended to get into things when their parents weren't watching them. One day before they left for the farm, a peddler stopped by the house. This peddler had all kinds of things to trade, like popsicles, cast-iron pots and pans, tin cups and plates. But, he also had something quite exceptional. Behind the main wagon of the peddler was a smaller wagon which was pulled by a big white Billy Goat. The old goat must have weighed 300 pounds. The goat had massive horns which were very intimidating to Granny. However, her two sons were not intimidated. Upon seeing the goat, her sons Paul and Bud ran to it and began petting and hugging the massive animal.

Granny looked at the old peddler and asked him about trading for the goat and small wagon. Unknown to Granny was the fact the old man wanted to get rid of the goat because it didn't like grown men. The old man looked at Granny and smiled. He traded the goat and wagon to Granny for a couple of setting hens. Granny thought she

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**Around The Farm**  
*Mickey Cummings*



### Chinese Privet

Chinese privet is an invasive weed that grows in leaps and bounds. It is capable of taking over large areas of land. The Georgia Forestry Commission consistently lists it at the top of their Dirty Dozen for nonnative invasive plants. It can become a real problem in wooded areas, especially along wood lines and roadsides. Let's talk about Chinese privet and how you can control it to keep it from overrunning our beautiful mountains.

Chinese privet was originally brought over to the U.S. in the mid 1800's to be used as a hedge. By the 1950's it had taken over entire forests. Privet puts on berries that birds and wildlife eat who spread the seeds and start new plants. Once established, the privet shrub will send up shoots around it to create a dense thicket that will force out native plants.

First, let's talk about how to identify it. Privet is a semi-evergreen to evergreen, which means that it's a lot easier to identify it during the winter because everything else has lost its leaves. It has thin bark with opposite leaves that are glossy. In early May, it puts on small white flowers that have four petals. It grows as a shrub, but it can grow up into the size of a small tree. The berries that it puts on are small, about the size of your pinky fingernail, and dark blue in color.

So, let's talk about controlling this invasive weed. For starters, it's good to be aware that controlling Chinese privet is not a one and done kind of deal. Repeated applications of herbicide will most likely be required. Late fall is the best time to treat privet with herbicides.

Hand pulling is an option only when plants are very small. If the plant doesn't come up easily, it's most likely a lateral shoot off a main plant. In this case, the main plant needs to be removed. A weed wrench is a tool that can make hand pulling of plants more effective, by allowing you to hand pull bigger plants. Brush mulching will level thickets of privet, but because it doesn't remove the roots, and regrowth will occur. However, that regrowth will be uniform, making it easier to control with herbicides.

The two main herbicides used to treat Chinese privet are glyphosate and triclopyr. There are a couple of different ways to make the application. A foliar application from a sprayer will work if you have a concentrated enough mix. Ready to use mixes are usually not strong enough. The issue with foliar applications is drift. Nearby plants will also be affected by the glyphosate.

A couple of other options are cut stump  
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**Blairsville - Union County Chamber**  
*Steve Rowe*



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**Watching and Working**  
*Jacob Williams*



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