

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Christmas Decorations & Fire Safety

Union County Fire Department hopes that everyone had a great Thanksgiving Holiday. As that holiday comes to an end, we start to look forward to the Christmas season. This season brings Christmas trees, decorations, candles, and the multiple lights that we love to see each year. These bring excitement and great joy, but they also can bring some danger. Union County Fire Department would like to remind everyone of the increased fire dangers that are associated with this time of year.

Christmas trees, especially live trees, can be a fire risk. Live trees can dry out quickly due to the low humidity in the home. They must be watered regularly to prevent them from drying out and becoming a fire hazard. Everyone has seen a video on how fast a dry, live tree can catch fire and burn. When choosing a location for the tree, do not place it near any heat sources. It should be at least three feet away. Make sure that the tree is set up on a stable platform. Trees can fall into a heat source if not stable. Christmas tree lights should always be turned off at night or when you are away. Christmas tree fires are not common but they can be very devastating to a home and the holidays.

Candles are associated with Christmas and the holidays. Increased use of candles, combined with an increase of combustible, seasonal decorations in many homes means more risk for fire. December is the peak time of the year for candle fires. Great care should be used around any open flames. Candles should be placed away from any flammable material. Children should not be allowed to have candles in their bedrooms or be allowed to use them. One third of the candle fires happen in bedrooms.

Electrical fires increase during this time of the year. Lights, decorations, and extension cords should be inspected for frays or exposed wires prior to use. Overloaded electrical outlets and faulty wires are a common cause of holiday fires. Avoid plugging too many lights and decorations into an outlet. Overloaded circuits can overheat and start a fire. For those outdoor decorations, use Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) outlets. Use lights that have a seal of an accredited certification agency.

These are just a few things to keep in mind when decorating. Union County Fire Department would like for everyone to be safe when preparing their home for this holiday season. ~Union County Fire Department - Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Hopes and Fears

“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (Isa. 40:31).

Michael Suderman, a minister in Washington D.C. has occasion to chat with and encourage elected officials. One member of Congress was frustrated with her constituents because their expectations were impossible. “Politicians aren’t superheroes!” she told him. Win or lose, emotions run high after elections and this year those flood waters are churning. That indicates that voters could have impossible expectations or unaddressed fears. If America hopes to find the high ground of honesty, decency, and peace, politics won’t take us there.

The word “expect” is so closely linked to “hope” that the Spanish verb “esperar” captures both ideas. Let’s separate them a bit. We might expect government leaders to do their jobs, but to say we put our hope in them is perilous. The ancient people God chose to bring forth the Messiah were as prone to that mistake as we are. The prophet promised a child to be born, “and the government will rest on His shoulders” (Isa. 9:6). So, during the Roman occupation, their expectations hardly extended beyond a political solution.

They missed the big picture. Paul quoted another ancient prophecy to them: “The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations. In him the Gentiles will hope” (Rom. 15:12). Jesse was the father of kings, yet the original source of this family would mysteriously appear later. This person wouldn’t be a national leader but would rule nations and offer hope to all people. That’s a far loftier expectation than overthrowing Roman rule or winning an election. History witnessed that hope fulfilled by Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, His death on Calvary’s cross, and His resurrection from the tomb. Jesus is our hope for peace with God, and His Providence is unfazed by any political outcome.

Humans seek reasons to hope. We yearn for a better day. Maybe that’s because of trouble, uncertainty, and fear. Maybe we are hard-wired to hope for abiding joy and lasting peace

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner’s Questions

Many Union County residents do not know that we offer transportation services. The availability of adequate transportation enables older persons to live independently in their communities, helps to prevent isolation and the possible need for long-term care placement. Many older people, who do not drive, must rely on family and friends to provide much of the transportation. But for others, it is necessary to find community resources to provide transportation, as this vital support service may be their only connection to the outside world.

Q. What is the Union County Transportation Services?

A. The local system offers rides for a nominal fee for those who need transportation to and from doctor’s appointments, the grocery store, drug stores, and other locations within the Union County limits.

Q. How is this service funded?

A. Partial funding for this service comes from the Federal Department of Transportation through GDOT. A 50/50 grant, Union County is responsible for matching 50% of the funding. Union County spends funds up front for such things as wages for drivers, dispatchers, fuel, maintenance, etc., and GDOT reimburses Union County for eligible expenses. Federal money is given to GDOT and that agency distributes these funds to Georgia counties. There are different types of funding for different types of transportation systems in the State of Georgia. The money that comes to Union County and surrounding counties is from the Section 5311 Program - which is for Rural Transit. Because of the county population, the size of the City of Blairsville, and the distance between transportation stops, funding for rural counties is limited to “on call” trips as opposed to regular bussing routes.

Q. How many vehicles does the Union County Transportation Services operate?

A. Two eight-passenger vans make up the fleet of the Union County Transportation system. The vans are air-conditioned, equipped with hydraulic chair lifts, and they are handicap accessible.

Q. How do I make use of the service?

A. If you want to take advantage of the transportation system...

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Expression of Love & Caring

Dear Editor,

We wear a mask as an expression of love and caring. I am your neighbor, and I care for my grandparents who are 88 and 90 years old. I look young and healthy, but when you refuse to wear a mask, you are endangering not only me but also the other members of my family. I understand that many of us are experiencing coronavirus fatigue right now, but there is a vaccine on the horizon if we can only get through this winter together. I implore us all to stay vigilant in our mask wearing and social distancing efforts during this holiday season.

I understand that this has become a hotly debated topic. However, my stepfather who is a doctor, and my mother who is a nurse, will testify that mask wearing is effective and does not pose any health risks.

Furthermore, mask wearing and social distancing are the only tools at our disposal right now to slow the spread of the coronavirus. So, let us think of this as a small act of love and charity. If you wear your mask you protect me, and if I wear my mask, I protect you. Because, after all, we are all in this together.

With warm regards,
Alyssa Fiorino

Trust Shaken

Dear Editor,

Election Day finally came, and I was looking forward to my candidate winning and for all the election turmoil and anticipation to be over. Well, my candidate has not won (yet), and believe me, I was disappointed. But that paled in contrast to the problems troubling my heart now.

Corruption and censorship have raised their ugly heads and threatened all but who are in control. My trust in our election process and freedom of speech and information have been so shaken that I truly fear for the liberties and freedoms that are the unique foundations of the country I love.

I have never in my lifetime doubted the outcome of an election in this country and have always gracefully accepted the people’s choice. I remember in 2008 when Obama was elected. I had not voted for him because I did not feel that his policies were best for the country. I was disappointed that my candidate had not won, but I remember thinking to myself how wonderful it was to be an American that day. Our first black president! It was a great statement about our country’s ability to dispel the myth of it being a country run by racists. I sincerely respected

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Forgive Us

Dear Editor,

Lord God, we stretch out our hands humbly in prayer for the unborn, for those precious lives that never had a chance to become a normal kid or grow up and perhaps be another Mary Theresa helping the less fortunate. Our nation was weak and wasn’t strong enough to say no to abortion clinics. A nation that has stood by for decades afraid to be united as one because of pressure from different parties in our own government system, which has become corrupt in all of its ways. And yes, even God’s people, the church, are guilty as well.

We have fallen short of God’s commandments by letting the enemy take everything that is Under God out of every aspect of our society, and we today can see the consequences of our sins against Almighty God. We have allowed others to tell us what is best for our nation and have turned our backs on the only hope for America, Christ Jesus.

Lord, we ask your forgiveness for not being the people you called us to be, a people of moral values, of courage and fortitude and strong in our faith and belief in the sanctity of human life. We as a nation are now beginning to see the

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Investing in others is a great way to receive a dividend.

Letters to the Editor

Global Warming - Part II

Dear Editor,

I submitted a letter to the editor on Global Warming that appeared in the Nov. 18 edition of the North Georgia News. Here are additional data and comments for the undecideds to ponder when analyzing the Global Warming Theory.

In the Carbon Cycle, CO2 is the source of the carbon found in living matter. Currently, we are producing CO2 at a much faster rate than the carbon can be stored via the carbon cycle. This is the result of a combination of many factors - high concentration of CO2 emitted in industrial areas and populated cities, low efficiency of photosynthesis, and the Carbon Cycle biochemically regulated to control the rate of the cycle to keep the parts of the biochemical reactions balanced and coordinated. The surplus CO2 is not one uniform layer over the surface of the Earth, but the changes in one part of the atmosphere affect other parts of the atmosphere.

An important fact that is often marginalized is the effect that a small amount of CO2 has on humans. For example, the air we breathe is primarily made up of only five gases: Nitrogen (78.084%), Oxygen (20.9476%), Argon (0.934%), Carbon Dioxide (0.0314%) and Neon (0.001818%). CO2 concentration in the air is typically 380 parts per million, or ppm, but we exhale the gas when we breathe - a crowded room, classroom, meeting room will reach CO2 levels of 1,000 to 3,000 ppm (0.1-0.3% of air). An increased concentration of CO2 creates drowsiness and reduced cognitive functions.

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, condensable gases, mainly CO2 with lesser amounts of methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), ground level ozone (O3) and man-made fluorocarbons have continually been building up in the Troposphere, with one exception. It was proposed by a college professor and his graduate student that they had evidence that fluorocarbons were the cause of the reported damage to the Ozone layer in the Stratosphere, the critical layer that filters out the UV radiation from the Sun. The cause of the damage to the Ozone layer was eventually substantiated, and fluorocarbons (Freon) are now banned or severely restricted by the Montreal Protocol of August 1987. The damaged Ozone layer was repaired by the photochemical reactions in the outer atmosphere.

Another component of concern is methane. Methane (CH4), a natural gas, is inert, unlike CO2, and not a component of the Carbon Cycle. The deforestation in the Brazilian rainforest produced large quantities of saw dust that was food for methane-producing bacteria in the gut of termites. The result was the largest single methane

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Teetotaler

I remember the days when my Papa would talk to me about morals and how I should conduct myself. He especially worried about me during my college years. One of the things he continuously harped upon was the consumption of alcohol. Finally, one day I asked him, “Papa, why don’t you drink?” He told me the following story.

“When I was a teenage boy, we went to ‘Church Singings’ to meet girls. That was one of the only places a girl and boy could socialize. One evening, Skeeter, Russell, Pick and a bunch of other boys were headed to St. Paul Church to a singing. We had a 3-mile walk to get to the church, so we stopped by a bootlegger’s house to get a gallon of wine. The only thing we could afford was some homemade Elderberry Wine. Seven of us boys drank that whole gallon of wine before we got to church.

“That singing turned into a long drawn out affair. Normally, a singing would last two to three hours. This one lasted nearly four hours, and I was feeling the need to go to the outhouse. However, I knew if I got up to leave, I would get a whipping. My parents were not there, but that didn’t matter. In those days, any parent would give you a whipping for being disrespectful in church. So, me and the boys just sat there.

“By the end of the service we were hurting. When the preacher dismissed the service, I got up and ran out the door. When I got to the safety of the bushes I was in for trouble. That Elderberry Wine does something to your insides. I was burning inside, and the more I went, the more I needed to go. That was an awful experience. I swore off of alcohol of any kind after that night. Also, drinking alcohol can get you into all kinds of trouble. So, I don’t want you to ever drink anything. I am a ‘Teetotaler,’ and I want you to be one as well.”

Even to this day I don’t drink, at least intentionally. Ten years ago, I began to can a few things out of the garden. One of the first things I tried was tomato juice. One day I decided to try to make some V-10 juice. I am one of those people who tinkers with recipes. So, I found some bell peppers, carrots, peas, celery, hot pepper, onion, parrot, tomatoes, apples, pears, blueberries and grapes to mix into the juice. After canning the concoction, I let it sit for a few months. When I opened the first bottle, the stuff fizzed and foamed. I was concerned, so I sent a bottle to the Food Science Department at UGA to have it analyzed. A few days later I received a phone call from a friend. I answered the call and she was laughing. She said, “Mickey, you have

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



What is IPM?

IPM is a pretty big buzz phrase out there in agriculture right now. It stands for Integrated Pest Management. Integrated means that you employ several different types of strategies. Pest in this case can refer to insects, diseases, weeds, or any other thing out there that you don’t want messing with your plants. Management is important. It’s not Integrated Pest Eradication. Management means that an acceptable threshold is found for the pest. Depending on what the pest is and what type of damage its doing affects what is an acceptable threshold. For example, the threshold for kudzu growing in a gully or ditch will be much higher than kudzu encroaching on your yard.

Management in IPM comes by a combination of biological, cultural, mechanical, and chemical means. By using a combination of these practices, the idea is that pests can be managed to minimize economic, environmental, and public health risks. IPM is a long term management strategy where chemical control is used as a last resort.

Biological control is using natural enemies of a pest for control. Ladybugs are an excellent example because they eat a lot of other insects that feed on garden plants. Another example is that UGA and UNG are conducting research on beetles that will control the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid that is ravaging our hemlocks. Cultural controls can include watering practices. A lot of fungal diseases are encouraged by wet conditions. Another example of cultural control is selecting disease resistant varieties to plant. An example of mechanical control is using traps for rodents or other pests to remove them. Mulch to prevent weeds from popping up is another example. Finally, chemical control involves spraying pesticides. When pesticides are applied they are used only where needed. Selective pesticides that are safest for the surrounding organisms are used.

Prevention of pest problems is a big part of IPM. When IPM is used on a large production scale quantitative thresholds will be set so that chemical sprays are used only when necessary. Spraying chemicals is not bad or disallowed when using IPM, you just try to be more conscientious of using sprays and use them sparingly. There are times and situations when biological, cultural, and mechanical aren’t effective and spraying is the only effective option of control available. The goal with IPM is to reduce the reliance on chemical applications for successful control.

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Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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