

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Earth Day

Earth Day is April 22. Established by Sen. Gaylord Nelson in 1970, and once started as a local movement, Earth Day is now an international one, dedicated to elevating the awareness of environmental protections and good stewardship of our planet. Many folks embrace taking care of, for the time being, the one and only planet on which we live, while others view environmental conservation as an extreme, often leftist, point of view.

In 1970, about 20 million Americans turned out to support Earth Day. What, perhaps, does Earth Day have to do with a military musing? Well, are you surprised to know that the United States Military is a major polluter of the planet? Waste, chemicals, fuel consumption, are all things that are of issue for our planet. Oil spills from big oil, raw sewage, toxic dumps, loss of wilderness and rain forests are also in the mix for a comprehensive view of Earth Day.

Earth Day was a catalyst for the Clean Air Act and the Environmental Protection Agency. It was also the inspiration for a 1992 United Nations Summit regarding global recycling, held in Rio de Janeiro. In the 1970s, anti-Viet Nam protests were not unfamiliar, and Nelson recognized that he could piggyback the Earth Day cause on Viet Nam, appealing to the flower power tree huggers of the day. It was an opportunity to raise awareness.

Early hints of planet activism are evidenced in a book by Rachel Carson, "Silent Spring," circa 1962. DDT was the hot point of the book. We all know that many defoliants and pest control chemicals were used, probably the most notable being AGENT ORANGE during the Korean and Viet Nam conflicts. Fifty years and 190 countries later, an estimated 1 billion – yup, with a "B" – were enjoined in the cause.

The Army official site includes this post: "Throughout the month of April, the Army and our nation will observe 50 years of Earth Day. Stewardship of our ecological treasures contributes to a quality environment and is an important part of military readiness." Earth Day should never be limited to a once-a-year observance. The Army, serious enough about the subject, has a separate command, the US Army Environmental Command, whose mission is protecting natural resources and caring for more than 13 million acres of

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Military Musings

Janice Walters-Taylor



Christian Hope

"This increasing godlessness in America is actually a good thing, to be welcomed and embraced" (LA Times). Professor Phil Zuckerman believes progressive secularism offers hope.

He admits that religious organizations do good, "however, such welcomed charity is ultimately an altruistic response to symptoms, not a structural cure for root causes." He promotes secular efforts to address housing and health care. He believes secularism offers a better hope for human rights, environmental issues, and social justice.

I could reverse these charges. Secular solutions do not recognize the basic problem. Humans are not "basically good" and just need more education. We are selfish, prideful, and yield to our base desires. Reckon with that root cause and solutions make more sense. Yet somehow the secular hope is that a sociologist or politician will usher in a better program to fix the human condition.

It's ultimately a worldview issue. Where is the hope if life is only material and limited by time? Where is the hope if we are all alone in a random, chaotic universe, and good and evil are just choices? Where is meaning in such a universe, if you deny the science that points to the metaphysical reality of a Creator God? Do you ever wonder how a mindless universe incapable of hope produces mindful, hopeful beings? A faulty worldview and its solutions address symptoms and cannot sustain hope. But even a misplaced hope teaches you something.

In "Mere Christianity," C. S. Lewis writes about misplaced hope. You can blame the object of hope (politicians or programs), or "decide that the whole thing was moonshine!" (lower your expectations). Or as he wrote, "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world ... I must make it the main object of life to press on to that other country and to help others to do the same." Hope, even misplaced, points to the transcendent.

Christians have hope for life here and now because of our future hope. Paul reflects on the Resurrection of Christ and writes, "If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. I pay a lot of taxes so I think the county should be able to repair my private road when we have a rain storm and flooding like we had recently. Why can't you?

A. I can't tell you the number of times we have heard this statement over the past several years and we really do understand the sentiment. However, state law dictates that unless there are unusual circumstances such as medical or safety issues, the county can not work on private roads. However, if there is a severe problem, let us know – just in case the State or Federal Government will allow us authority and funding for additional work. There is nothing that would make us happier than to be able to go around and instantly repair all the washed-out spots in the county on private roads.

Having said that, if we do everything possible to help and if we simply cannot do more, we will try to advise you on how to have your road repaired and give you a list of contractors to contact. We suggest that you first contact the other property owners and ask them to share in the expense. We can make a list of adjacent property owners for you if that will help.

Q. Our road ditch seemed to be stopped up with leaves, which also stopped up our culvert. Can't the Road Dept. keep all the county ditches clean?

A. We have over 600 miles of county roads which equates to many more miles of ditches. We try to keep them cleaned as much as possible, but with the tight budgets of all counties, we also try to keep our employee number down to a minimum. We simply cannot keep all the ditches cleaned all the time. We work on some ditches each year so that over a three-year period we usually can get around to most of them. Often, we find homeowners raking their leaves into the county road ditch. This practice only makes the problem worse. We would ask the public to help out where you can.

Q. We want the county to take over maintenance of our road. What is the process for doing this?

A. After recent heavy rains we had many, many calls and visitors about this issue. Here again, it is not a simple answer. In 1994 the county ordinance was changed and from that date for-

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Rigged Tax System

Dear Editor,
Corporate America has never had it so good. A new report from our friends at the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy shows that 55 of the largest U.S. corporations paid \$0 in federal income taxes in 2020 on more than \$40 billion in profits.

Had they paid the current corporate tax rate of just 21%, they would have paid \$8.5 billion in taxes. Instead, they received \$3.5 billion in rebates!

President Biden has proposed a corporate tax reform plan that would begin to fix our rigged tax system — increasing the corporate tax rate to 28% while adding a 15% minimum rate so none of these corporate tax dodgers can get away with paying nothing in federal income taxes.

What a country...

Jim Morris

MLB Fiasco

Dear Editor,
The law-abiding citizens of Georgia are disgusted with Major League Baseball for taking a political stance by removing the All-Star Game from Georgia because our governor wants to make voting fair for all Georgians. Moving this year's All-Star Game out of Atlanta, because of Georgia's new voting law, MLB has surrendered to political correctness and mob rule. It has been reported that Major League Baseball Commissioner Robert Manfred decided to move the All-Star Game on his own after holding extensive discussions with voting rights groups associated with LeBron James, Stacey Abrams and Rev. Al Sharpton. Now there is an objective trio of advisers.

The Georgia law is in many ways more open and advanced than laws of other states including Delaware and New York. Even the liberal Washington Post has said President Biden is lying in his criticisms of the Georgia law. We must stand up for what is right and tell Coca-Cola, Delta and the woke companies that support MLB to stay out of politics. This can be done easily by not buying their products. You can also contact them by phone, email, or letter and voice your disgust. This is definitely another hoax perpetuated by the liberal left, not based on facts, but following their agenda to allow illegal voting. With the liberals, the TRUTH does not matter.

I am done with MLB and their corporate sponsors. It is a shame that today's MLB allows political correctness to intrude on America's National Pastime!

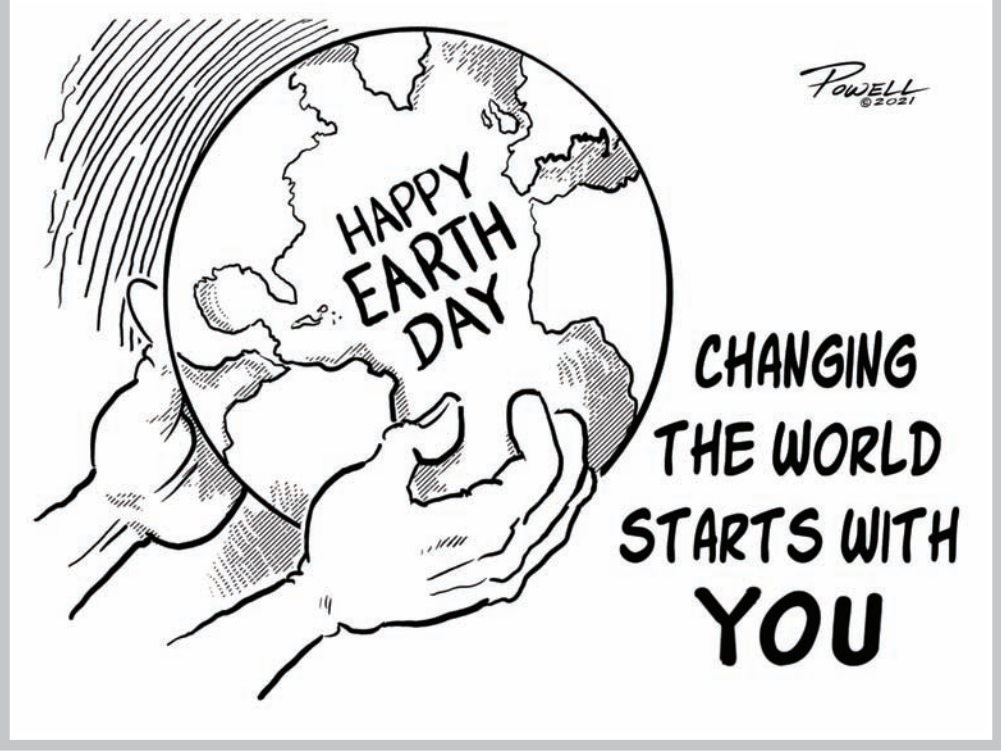
Bill Scott

Be Careful What You Wish For

Dear Editor,
This is in response to the "Sole Commish" letter to the editor in the April 14th publication. Be careful what you wish for. My husband and I live between Blairsville and Blue Ridge and subscribe to each township's newspaper. Granted, a sole commissioner could, in fact, run a dictatorship and fail miserably for the residents. This is not the case with Commissioner Paris. The decisions he's made over the years have been in consideration of the residents and the future of Union County. Though Commissioner Paris could drop dead at any moment, consider the alternative... the failed commission of Fannin County and the City of Blue Ridge.

For the past two terms, your western neighboring county and city's commissioners have bickering relentlessly like kindergartners. Even a Judge during a bond hearing admonished two Blue Ridge city commissioners for their childlike behavior. The county and the city leaders hold closed meetings, send secret emails, and make unilateral decisions on expenditures — no discussions with fellow commissioners, no voting. In the county public meetings, the former chairman denied citizens the privilege to speak.

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Local Farmers Markets

This is one I do every year at this time to remind you to support your local farmers, buy the crops that they have grown in the local area which supports the local economy, creates local jobs, and makes us eat healthier. I saw a small cup of apple juice that had juice from US, Mexico, Poland, California, and several other foreign countries.

Think about the transportation costs and time it takes to get the products from there to here on our table. Why not just use what we have here? Is that too simple or am I overlooking something, like supporting foreign shippers or overseas growers that don't add one cent to our local economy.

I will buy American no matter what it costs because, it will help us one way or another. The only fruit that is really fresh is grown in our part of the country so look at the labels and buy local. It's that time of year that we look forward to all winter when the farmer's markets open and local grown vegetables are ready for us to enjoy. Those who know me know that my favorite past-time is growing things here on my Grandfathers old farm down on the river in Towns County.

Walter Brown was the first Towns County Agent in 1914 and eventually became the Director of the UGA Extension Service in Athens, so I get my ag experience honestly having grown up on my family's farm in Taylor County, where we grew hay, vegetables, and other things that contributed to the food supply of our area. We plant oats, corn and soybeans in the fields, and cut flowers and vegetables in our High Tunnels that grow (sometimes) into something we can eat or sell. Of course, farming requires my other favorite things -- tractors and equipment to prepare the ground, plant the crops, and harvest what the bears and other critters don't eat before we do.

I never was one to use a hoe or manual equipment like that when I can use my 100 horsepower Kubota with AC, stereo and air ride seat (we've come a long way since the A John Deere), or my 1964 Ford 4000, my 1958 Ford 871, my 1952 Ford 8N, or my 1954 Ford 740, to prepare, plant and harvest (I like old things).

We always plant more crops than we can eat or give away so we sell all that we can at one of the local farmer's markets or on the roadside on our farm. Sweet corn will be ready in late July. If we figured how much the vegetables that we plant really cost we would just go to the farmer's market and buy our vegeta-

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RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



Loonie Kent

The little town of Phil Campbell in northern Alabama was comprised of a railroad depot, grocery store, cotton gin, barber shop, post office, a dry goods store, pharmacy, a bank, pool hall and a doctor's office. A small little town that was normally very quiet and the people peaceable. However, there was a family by the name of Loughter out to the east of town in a little community called Shady Grove. This family had a bad reputation for causing trouble in the area. They bullied the police force in the town so much that the only law enforcement official in town resigned. So, the mayor went looking for an honest person with a tough personality to come to Phil Campbell.

Loonie Kent was 6 feet, 3 inches tall, and weighed in at over 210 pounds. He had big hands and piercing eyes. His voice was kind of mellow and he would have made a good baritone in the church choir. At least, his voice was mellow until he got excited, then the tone changed to a high pitch, and when he spoke, the sound was kind of like a squeal, squeaky and a little on the feminine side. He was a big and intimidating man until he got excited. But once he was excited, the sound of his voice made you want to laugh.

The Loughter boys showed up on the first Friday night after the new policeman had taken the oath of office. They were at the pool room trying to hustle people out of their money, and the alcohol had begun to take effect upon them. They became boisterous and loud. So, Mr. Steele called the new policeman. This was just what the boys wanted.

They had been bragging that they would be teaching "Loonie" a lesson. So, when he showed up to calm the boys down, the youngest of the wild boys got his attention by calling him a bad name. The officer became angry, and his voice began to change into the high-pitched, cracking voice of a teenager. The Loughters began to laugh, which infuriated the officer even more. While his attention was on the youngest boy, the older one came from behind with a pool stick and knocked Loonie out cold. While he was unconscious, the boys beat and kicked the policeman and left him lying in a pool of blood.

The Loughters bragged to anyone which would listen that they had taught the new policeman a lesson. But they didn't know this man very well. He was carried down to Doc Underwood's place where he recovered after 3 1/2 weeks. As soon as he was able to walk, the officer went hunting. He drove over to Shady Grove and found two of the boys at a moonshine still. When

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

Have you seen small white cottony balls on hemlock trees? If you have then that means those trees are infested with Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). Let's look at why it's important to preserve hemlocks, what is the pest that is killing them, and what you can do to save them.

We are getting to the time of year when they really start to come out. Hemlocks are a native species that ranges from Maine to Northern Alabama. They are a keystone species that provides habitat for about 120 species of vertebrates and over 90 species of birds. Hemlocks are unique in their ability to thrive in shade. This attribute makes them common in ravines and along rivers and streams. Their proximity to streams and rivers means that they are crucial in reducing erosion and watershed protection. Hemlocks can be identified by their needles. They have short flat needles with two distinctive pale white stripes on the underside. The needles are wider at the base and taper to a rounded tip, unlike firs that have parallel sides the whole way down.

HWA is a very small insect. The white cottony sacks on the hemlock trees are egg sacks of HWA. They are an invasive species from Asia that doesn't have a natural predator here. HWA feeds on the sap inside of hemlock trees. Wind, birds, deer, or humans can spread the HWA. Once a tree has become infested, it will die within four to 10 years. Therefore, it is important to treat trees as soon as possible after finding that they have been infested.

It has been important to treat your own trees with cultural and chemical controls. Cultural controls include keeping hemlocks well mulched and watered. Hemlock trees don't have very deep roots and droughts can make them more susceptible to infection. Don't place any bird feeders or deer feeders near your trees. Birds and deer can carry the eggs for long distances. If you are hiking in an area that has HWA wash your clothes afterward because you may be carrying eggs. Be careful to not over-fertilize your trees as that could make them more enticing to HWA. Cultural controls may keep your trees healthy, but when they become infested, chemical controls are the only option. Chemical controls involves treating your tree with either Imidacloprid or Dinotefuran, and is the most common and effective method of control. An imidacloprid treatment will last four or five years. However, it may take one year before it is effective. Dinotefuran will last for two years in the tree and will take about four to six weeks to take effect. The ideal way to apply either of these insecticides is by soil injection.

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Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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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

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 \$5. 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. 17, 1988, 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.

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