

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Hurricane Zeta

Hurricane Zeta set a record as the 11th named storm to make landfall in the U.S. in a single season. Yes, it is 2020. We here in the North Georgia Mountains do not deal with hurricanes as often as our friends on the coast, however, we do get a few hurricanes or storms that effect our area. It is rare that we have a hurricane or storm come directly through our area such as Zeta did.

We saw or felt the impacts of this storm. We saw the wind, rain, flooding, and the many trees that were brought down. Some felt the effects of losing power, communications, and even some damage from flooding or trees.

We had been preparing for this storm for a couple days prior. Plans were activated and extra staff were called in. The Road Department and public safety were ready. That morning our Emergency Operations Center was opened at 04:30. The E911 center began receiving multiple calls that morning about trees down and blocked roads. Law Enforcement officers, Road Department, and GDOT began to immediately secure these roads and to clear the multiple trees.

The Union County Swiftwater Team, which was put on alert the night before, was called in for rescue missions. We had three major water rescue missions and several minor missions that day. Most involved persons who were trapped in their homes and were needing to get to safety. Teams deployed to remove these people from the flooded area and rapidly moving water. There were several calls involving trees that had hit homes with people inside, but we were blessed to have no injuries. We also had some calls of people inside their car that were hit by a falling tree or power line.

There were over 8,000 customers without power in Union County at one time. Trees were on the power lines; lines were torn down; and utility poles were broken. Some areas had so many trees down that it was difficult for crews to get to them. Utility crews worked many hours to get to these problems and correct them.

This is just a highlight of the emergency operations performed for this one storm. It is a reminder to everyone to be better prepared for such storms by building ready kits and having an emergency plan. We would like to thank the many public and private partners who worked tirelessly to restore our county after this storm.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Life in the Sun

“The Lord has spoken, and summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting” (Psa. 50:1).

May cancer be forever wiped from the face of the earth. And it will be in time, either by the wisdom God gives, or by His promise of a new heaven and a new earth. Life in the sun is more precious when long enjoyment suffers diminishing prospects due to dread disease.

Denial and anger lurk in the shadows of such dim news. He has so much left to offer, so many who care. She is so kind, so giving. It isn't fair. It all feels so random. Why not another someone? Walter Hooper, secretary to C. S. Lewis, faced those thoughts during Lewis' declining health. He wrote, "I told Lewis that I was tempted to tell Our Lord that I thought it monstrously unfair that He should allow (a certain naughty old man) to seemingly go on forever and yet let Lewis, only 64, come close to death. 'What is that to you?' Lewis replied." Lewis had quoted the Lord's rebuke to Peter who raised the same objection, comparing his lifespan to John's (John 21:22).

God's sovereignty in your life has purpose. He "determined their appointed times...that they would seek God" (Acts 17:26-27). But faced with the prospect of loss, it's easy to look on the past as all that matters. In 1973, Terry Jacks recorded the downcast "Seasons in the Sun." About three people close to him he sang, "We had joy, we had fun, we had seasons in the sun." It's OK to grieve for what is lost and what might have been. Yet for the believer, the future is expectant! It is not for us to "grieve as do the rest who have no hope" (1 Thes. 4:13).

Growing old also makes you think about life in the sun. A lady of fine vintage who enjoyed writing verse bore a child some threescore years past. He inherited that predilection. Yet I make no claim that my verse is as clever as hers. I'm typically inspired by birthdays. Alas, I confess and disclose my latest:

It's my birthday and it's a big one. Life's a journey and I am not done.

If I have one thing to say, to borrow a phrase, if I may:
I've no less days to sing God's praise than when I first begun.

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



See Fowler, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

Q. When is the new gym facility going to open?

A. The ribbon cutting will be on Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2020, at 2 p.m. There are still some final details being finished up inside the building, but we plan on being able to open it and have staff there during the week of Nov. 9.

Q. What days and hours will the gym facility be open?

A. The gym facility will be open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The Recreation Department offices in the building will have the hours of Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to answer the phone and handle any sports and activity registrations or reservations.

Q. What activities will be available in the new gym facility for the public?

A. When the building is open, people can come in and use the two gymnasiums for walking or exercising. The walking area will be around the perimeter of the gym floors and through the lobby area to make a big rectangle-shaped walking area. It will be great for people to use to get exercise when the weather is bad or cold outside. The Recreation Department also has Zumba classes scheduled in one of the gyms during the morning hours if anyone is interested in that. The facility also has a large meeting room for civic groups to use for meetings or for parents to rent out for birthday parties. You can contact the Recreation Department at 706-439-6074 to find out the rental rates and availability for parties, meetings, or use of one of the gyms.

Q. What else are the gyms going to be used for?

A. The main use for the gyms during basketball season will be for all the youth basketball teams we have under the Recreation Department to practice and play games. One gym is called the "purple" gym, and the other gym is called the "gold" gym. That will help the players, parents and grandparents know which gym their practice or games are happening in. During the year when basketball season is over, the gyms can be used for other public basketball or volleyball use when reserved through the Recreation Department office.

Q. Besides the two gyms, what else is in the facility?

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Charge Against America

Dear Editor,

As God had a charge against the nation of Israel, He also has a charge against America. Both nations have sinned and have brought about their own sad affairs. Religion had become a cover-up for their sins. God refused to hear because of their iniquities, not because He was hard of hearing. Many people today think God has a hearing problem, but the problem lies with the people's attitude of disobedience to a Holy God. In the book of Israel, chapter 59 verse 2 says: But your sins have separated you from God and your sins have hid His face from you that He will not hear. God is not a sounding board for us to play games with, for God is displeased with our efforts and we fall short of what is expected of us.

Even today the nations of Israel and America have not truly repented of their sins, and we can see God's judgment that is forthcoming if we don't get right with Him. It's not that God doesn't love us; if He didn't, why would He send

See Combs, page 5A

Misrepresentation of Facts

Dear Editor,

I just read the Oct. 28 letter to the editor titled "One Election Away from Socialism." It struck me that every single point the author made was either an error, an exaggeration or it lacked the necessary context to be considered truthful or accurate. I imagine he was excited to get published, and I support everyone's right to expound on his or her likes and dislikes, and I even understand the desire to boost the impact of political rhetoric. What I don't understand is why a responsible newspaper editor would print something so intentionally a misrepresentation of the facts at anytime and especially this close to an election. Fact checking is everyone's responsibility and has never been so necessary until the art-of-the-lie became routine and even condoned by our president.

Peace & Be Safe

Ridge Magee

RE: Democratic Party Accomplishments

Dear Editor,

Last week, a kind soul let us know all about the accomplishments of The Democratic Party. There's just one problem, they left out a few.

Democratic Party Accomplishments: Slavery and Expansion of Slavery into New Territories; the Civil War; Jim Crow Laws; Poll Taxes; The KKK, Night Rides, Lynchings; Obamacare (by the way, I lost my health care coverage three years in a row thanks to that wonderful thing — no keeping my doctor or my plan for me).

Oh, and do's not forget that wonderful quagmire called The Vietnam War. Thank you, Democrats.

The letter writer also issued a challenge to name one single accomplishment of The Republican Party. I can name more than one: Ending Slavery; Ending the Vietnam War; Winning the Cold War, etc. There are more, but those are

See Rains, page 5A

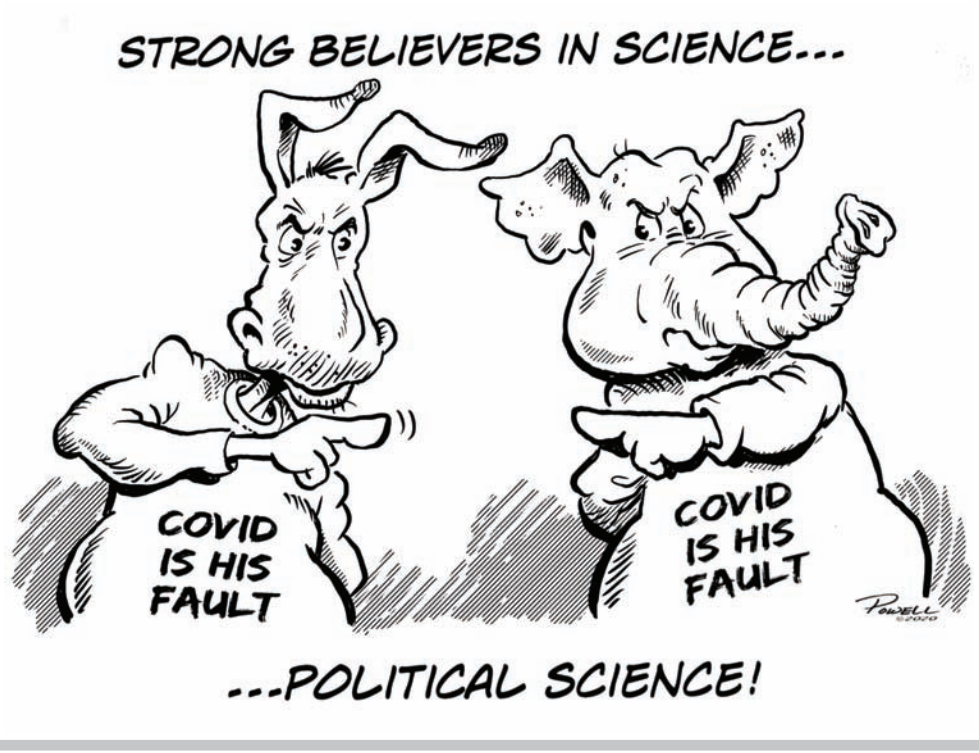
Thank You UCFD, HOP

Dear Editor,

On Oct. 3, 2020, we had a terrible house fire. We cannot express the amount of gratitude we have for the Union County Fire & Rescue squad for their great effort and hard work in putting out the fire we had.

Also, I would like to thank our great neighbors, friends and family for supporting us in this time and providing us with clothes and gift cards in the days and weeks following the fire. I would also like to thank The House of Prayer Church for their prayer letters and collection they had for us. Thank you Blairsville for being the greatest community to live in.

Appreciatively **Inbert and Donna Smith, John and Dolores Eckhoff, and Nitro, too**



Society of St. Andrew

America wastes roughly 40% of its food. Of the estimated 125 to 160 billion pounds of food that goes to waste every year, much of it is perfectly edible and nutritious. Food is lost or wasted for a variety of reasons: bad weather, processing problems, overproduction and unstable markets cause food loss long before it arrives in a grocery store, while overbuying, poor planning and confusion over labels and safety contribute to food waste at stores and in homes.

Food waste also has a staggering price tag, costing this country approximately \$218 billion per year. Uneaten food also puts unnecessary strain on the environment by wasting valuable resources like water and farmland and filling our landfills. At a time when 12 percent of American households are food insecure, reducing food waste by just 15 percent could provide enough sustenance to feed more than 25 million people, annually.

When we hear a producer saying, "It's a shame this has to go to waste," that is when they should call the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) which is a non-profit organization that uses volunteers to "clean" the fields to harvest or get food that would otherwise go to waste. They know that farmers are in business to make a profit, so they will never ask a farmer to donate first-quality produce or even sell it to them at a discount. But if they have produce that they will be unable to sell, that will simply be left to rot in fields or in a landfill, then they need to talk to SoSA. They can let SoSA know what will work for them, and that will be the goal. SoSA will make it easy for a farmer to donate surplus and unmarketable food.

SoSA handles all the logistics of getting the fresh, but unmarketable produce to thousands of feeding agencies across the country. SoSA will follow the producer's instructions about agencies they prefer to support or avoid. SoSA will track exactly which agencies receive the produce they donate and where it is distributed.

SoSA has 40 years' experience, working with thousands of growers across the 48 contiguous United States. By 2019, they had distributed more than 850 million pounds of healthy fruits and vegetables that were not commercially marketable but were still fresh and safe to be eaten. SoSA has learned from the best on how to distribute the food safely and efficiently.

SoSA tracks the produce donations by

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RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



What's in a Name?

Traipsing around these mountains leaves me with many questions about the places I visit. How did the name of a place come about? Why did a person think of naming a place in the way it was named? Some places are evident for the name they are called. However, some leave me wondering...

For example, looking to the northwest while walking off Bald Mountain on the Rocky Lead you can see a cove cutting into the side of a high ridge. The creek cutting through the cove is called Cross Mountain Branch. The creek appears to be flowing up and across the ridge, hence the name, "Cross Mountain Branch."

Another interesting place name is "Lord A Mercy Cove," which can be found on the left side of Highway 180 while traveling south toward Tesnatee Gap on the Richard Russell Road. At this point the present road parallels the old Logan Turnpike. I have been told by people that the first folks that came here in a wagon across the turnpike exclaimed "Lord A Mercy" when they first viewed the cove from Tesnatee Gap.

Forest Service Road 100 travels along the spine of Ivy Log Mountain before turning northward. If you drive down this road you will pass through places like Jenkins Gap -- named for an ancestor of the Jenkins family -- Flint Gap, Sharp Gap and Chestnut Flats. I can guess that Sharp Gap was named due to the fact that it looks as if someone cut a slice out of the mountain. The incline from the ridge top into this gap is very sharp. I am sure Chestnut Flats was named for the many Chestnut Trees which must have occupied the place at one time. And I really don't know about Flint Gap except that flint could be found there.

Down in Choestoe close to Pine Top Church is a place called the Mitchell Fields. Jerry Dyer took me to this old farmstead where you can still see the foundation of an old Spring House and other outbuildings. As I stood there looking across an area that was once fields of corn and collards I wondered about the Mitchell Family that once called this place home.

Traveling through Owl Town, if you have the gumption, you can walk up to a ridge line on Forest Service property where you will almost stumble upon the remnants of an old fort. There are many Fort Mountains around north Georgia. On this particular mountain you can still see the foundations of a walled-in area that appears to have been a fort. I have heard many theories about why this fort was built. People have told me it was built by Spaniards to protect them from attacks by either the English or Cherokee.

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Soil Testing

Soil testing is a very important part of growing a quality crop, having a good looking garden, having a quality lawn, or a good pasture. Soil testing gives you an insider look at what is going on in your soil. Let's take a look at what a soil test can do for you and why it's a good idea to have your soil tested.

If you have a garden at your house it's a good idea to have your soil tested every other year. A soil test will show you the pH, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, zinc, and manganese levels in your soil. These are essential elements for plant growth. Nitrogen is also a very important nutrient for plant growth. However, nitrogen is very mobile in the soil. Therefore, you could test your soil and by the time that you receive your soil results back from the lab the amount of nitrogen in the soil could be drastically different.

pH is often the most limiting factors when it comes to growing plants in the mountains. A soil test will tell you the pH and the recommended lime to bring that pH up to an acceptable level for the plants. Any lime that is added to soil will take 3-6 months to fully take effect. That means for spring plantings, now is a good time to take a soil test and begin adding lime.

When taking a sample for your lawn, a depth of 4 inches is appropriate. If you're taking a sample for gardens, ornamentals, mixed fruit trees, and wildlife plots sample to a depth of 6-8 inches. You can use a spade or a soil probe. When you take the sample it's best to take multiple samples from around the plot that you are interested in. This way you'll get an average of the area that you're sampling and a better representative sample. Using a trowel or small shovel, take 8-10 samples and mix them together in a bucket. From that bucket take the sample that you'll bring into the Extension office so that we can send it to the UGA labs. Make sure that you get enough soil so that the lab can test properly. About 2 cups of soil is needed.

If you're sampling from an area that has mulch or grass on top of it push that material away so that you penetrate down to the soil. Pull out any rock or roots that you get with the soil sample and throw them away. When you take the sample, spread the wet/damp soil on a newspaper and let the soil air out overnight before bringing it in to the office, so that it dries down some.

When deciding how many samples you need to take, look at the area and determine how many different types of conditions you have. For example, if you have a low lying spot, a steep slope, and a wooded area, each one of these

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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