

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Heating Safety

There is something about the winter months and curling up with a good book by the fireplace. But did you know that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths?

With a few simple safety tips and precautions you can prevent most heating fires from happening. Be warm and safe this winter!

Keep anything that can burn at least three feet (one meter) away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater. Have a three-foot (one metre) "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters. Never use your oven to heat your home.

Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions. Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.

Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed. Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.

Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home. Test smoke alarms at least once a month.

FACT Half of home heating fires are reported during the months of December, January, and February. Install wood burning stoves following manufacturer's instructions or have a professional do the installation. All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Install and maintain CO alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning.

If you smell gas in your gas heater, do not light the appliance. Leave the home immediately and call your local fire department or gas company. Often called the invisible killer, carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely.

In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel can be sources of carbon monoxide. CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes or standards.

For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height. Choose a CO alarm that is listed by a qualified testing laboratory. Call your local fire department's non-emergency number to find out what number to call if the CO alarm sounds. Test CO alarms at least once a month; replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.

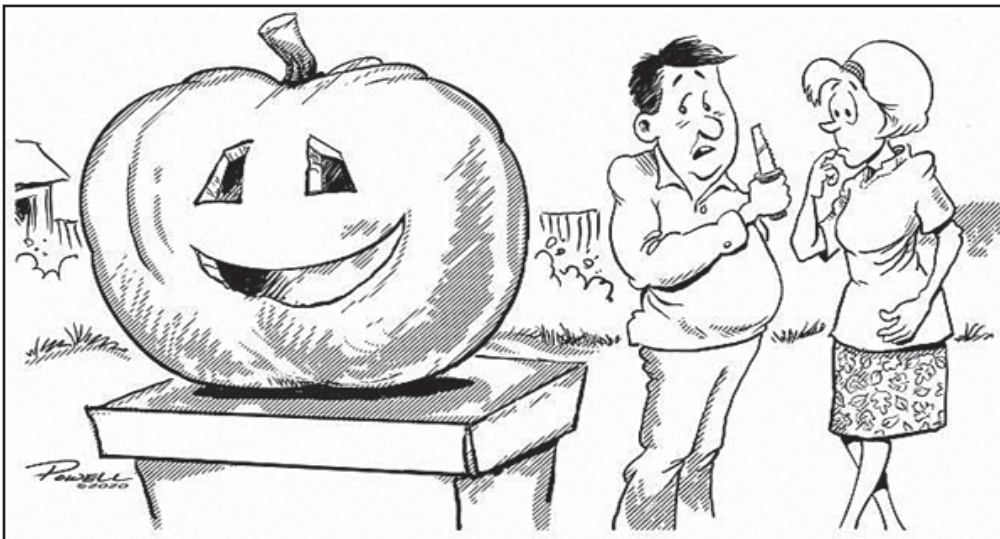
If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the fire department. If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for.

Call for help from a fresh air location and stay there until emergency personnel declare that it is safe to re-enter the home.

If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow.

During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up. Generator should be used in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors and vent openings. Gas or charcoal grills can produce CO — only use outside.

For more information on things you can do to become firewise check out www.firewise.org or www.chestchatt.org.



"I thought I'd go with a happy face. This year has already been scary enough!"

Attention Shoppers

Last week on some ubiquitous social media platform I did a quick straw poll. The responses were interesting. This was the proposition – see what you think:

How many thought better of celebrities before you knew their political opinions? How many have been disappointed in (angry with, sad for) a friend after learning their political opinion? (How many have lost a friend because of how you or they voted?) How many have changed their vote because of a tweet or facebook post? There was wisdom in establishing the vote as a secret ballot. Should we revisit that tradition?

Several people agreed with the proposition. Some correctly pointed out that free speech is a right that should not be suppressed. After all, the First Amendment includes the right to express opinions that other people find objectionable, and the Constitution does not safeguard our feelings.

Nevertheless, as we witness the general erosion of civil society empowered by corporate/social media, it behooves us to ask ourselves how we can improve the situation. I think a good place to start would be to depose the almighty opinion from the throne it now occupies in our culture and to learn the difference between a right and an entitlement.

Think of it this way. Entitlement implies a special privilege. You have a right to pass gas in an elevator. You don't have a special privilege to do so, and if you abuse the right, you contribute to the erosion of civil society.

Thus you have a right to your opinion, but you are not entitled to it. You can seek entitlement by gathering information, weighing evidence, applying reason and giving due consideration to how you will express your thoughts. Do they need to be expressed at all? Are they true, as much as personal truth can be? Are they kind? Do they improve the silence? Chances are that the meme you shared that was created by a bot or a political operative does not qualify.

The world of talking heads and pixels that dominates the national discourse is an arena for competition for attention. Whether it's clicks for dollars or little doses of adrenaline and serotonin, we have all become shoppers for attention. Look here! This breaking news is unprecedented. Look at me! I'm one of us, not one of them, so please like my opinion and reinforce my sense of belonging.

But how can we discuss the issues and work out our differences if we don't share our opinions? It's all in how we share. Most of us would prefer a polite description of what you had for lunch to a burp in the face. Come to think of it, we don't really need to know what you had for lunch unless you're recommending a restaurant.

We could also spend more time paying attention than shopping for it. "To pay attention" is a beautiful concept. It implies cost and effort in exchange for knowledge. We could be a bit more like the iconic character, Foggy Dewhurst, standing at attention, and less the verbal old west gunslinger shooting from the hip at every offense, real or implied.

Finally, when we do need to discuss issues, the conversation would be a lot more productive if we actually discussed the issues rather than the personalities and the character flaws of the political celebrities associated with those issues. I only knew my grandfather for a fraction of his long life, but in my hearing he rarely discussed politics, and when he did, he didn't talk about politicians. I never once heard him say how he had voted.

It seems almost a quaint social convention in today's society, but when we read history we begin to realize that the sense of opinion entitlement is not unique to our time. Civil War era newspapers were full of insults and provocations, and the nation was torn apart at a time when news traveled mainly on foot or by horseback. We should never give up the right to free speech, but at a time when the almighty opinion travels instantaneously, perhaps we should pay closer attention to it.

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 and basal bark. Cut stump will require a saw for you to cut the plant down to just a couple of inches above ground level. Then apply the triclopyr or glyphosate at a strong concentration using a brush on directly onto the tree where the stump is exposed. It may be beneficial to include a dye spray indicator so that you can tell which stumps have been treated. Basal bark means using triclopyr ester at the base of the plant, spraying the herbicide in a ring on the base. Herbicide treatments work well with controlling privet, but they can still be time consuming. Whenever applying any kind of pesticide always read and follow the label instructions.

If you have questions about privet control contact your local Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

RC&D

Frank Riley
Executive Director



The Middle Path
By: Don Perry
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UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Letters to The Editor

2020 Liberal Democratic Party Platform

Dear Editor,

The 2020 liberal Democratic Party platform is an all-encompassing and mind-boggling 92 pages of how a Liberal DNC House, Senate, and President would run our country. It clearly states exactly how the Liberal DNC proposes to handle every problem faced by America.

Some of the issues include: 1) universal healthcare and Medicaid for all Americans and illegal aliens, 2) immediate citizenship for illegals, 3) free college, 4) forgiveness of student loans, 5) eliminate border walls and immigration enforcement, 6) make Washington D.C. the 51st state, 7) \$70 trillion for the Green New Deal, where the USA would close all coal & natural gas power plants by 2035, 8) immediately restore voting rights for convicted felons, 9) make gun manufacturers responsible and liable for how their guns are used, in other words, destroy gun manufacturing and, 10) declare and treat drug use as a mental illness instead of an illegal activity.

This is liberal progressive socialism at its heart. This is crazy. Read it for yourselves. You can download it at democrats.org. We are on the precipice as a nation right now. If Donald Trump isn't re-elected the American experiment is over.

Tim Groza

Racist Denial

Dear Editor,

Regarding Letter to the Editor from 10-14-20: The writer asks, "What does the Bible Say on Race?" In answer to her own question the writer says the only mention of race in the Bible refers to "foot races". This reveals a blind eye to the historical reality by asking the wrong question. The pertinent racial question should be: What does the Bible say about SLAVERY? Which, for African-Americans has meant suffering for 400 years by being stolen from their homeland by white supremacists and forced by threat of death to work for no pay and for a life of degradation and suffering.

Here's what the Bible says about slavery: Ephesians 6:5-8 Paul states, "Slaves, be obedient to your human masters with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ" which is Paul instructing slaves to obey their master. Similar statements regarding obedient slaves can be found in Colossians 3:22-24, 1 Timothy 6:1-2, and Titus 2:9-10. In a pro-slavery Senate speech from 1837, John C. Calhoun, owner of hundreds of slaves, said: maintaining slave relations "is indispensable to the peace and happiness of both [races]." ...And "Never before has the black race of Central Africa, from the dawn of history to the present day, attained a condition so civilized and so improved, not only physically, but morally and intellectually."

Gov. George McDuffie, Democratic governor of South Carolina said in 1835 speech: "No human institution, in my opinion, is more manifestly consistent with the will of God than domestic slavery. Under both the Jewish and Christian...religion, domestic slavery existed with the...sanction of its prophets, its apostles, and finally its great Author.

The above historical roots of U.S. slavery lay bare efforts by today's Christians who find the Bible and Christianity innocent by comparisons to "foot races." Such arguments about race are based on hypocrisy, denial and deception.

Lance Jobson

GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write.

Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

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Hiawassee, GA 30546

Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net

Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc.

Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*

Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

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